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The Relationship Between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Coping with Interpersonal Conflict in Adulthood

Jennifer Leigh Kerpelman
Old Dominion University

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE
AND COPING WITH INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN ADULTHOOD

By

Jennifer Leigh Kerpelman

B.S. May 1983, Old Dominion University

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Approved by:

Louis H. Janda, Ph.D. (Director)

Raymond H. Kirby, Ph.D.

Robin J. Lewis, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AND COPING WITH INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN ADULTHOOD

Jennifer Kerpelman
Old Dominion University, 1990
Director: Dr. Louis H. Janda

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between childhood sexual abuse and the adult woman's ability to cope with interpersonal conflict. Seventy women participated in the study. They were placed in one of two groups: sexually abused during childhood (SAC) or not abused during childhood (NAC). The subjects were recruited from several self-help groups and mental health facilities. The subjects completed inventories which measured coping strategies, problem solving abilities, attributional style, and assertion style and dating comfort. It was found that the SAC group members perceived less personal control than the NAC group when dealing with problem situations. The two groups also differed in their attributional styles for good and bad achievement events. The SAC members were more inclined to view negative events as internal, stable and global than were the NAC group members. For positive events, the NAC group viewed the events as more internal and global than the SAC group.

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The Relationship Between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Coping with Interpersonal Conflict in Adulthood

According to the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, during 1988 over two million cases of child abuse were reported. Of those reports, 352,000 involved sexual abuse (Cook & Wakeland, 1989). Research concerning childhood sexual abuse has grown during the past ten years. Sexual abuse has been defined by Gold (1986) to be "(a) sexual contact (i.e., physical touch) between a child (12 years old and under) and a postpubertal person at least 5 years older than the child; (b) sexual contact between an adolescent (13 to 16 years old) and an adult at least 10 years older, or (c) sexual contact between any child or adolescent under 16 years old and a person or persons who use physical force" (p. 472). This definition appears to cover the main factors of sexual abuse, both completely and concisely. Browne and Finklehor (1986) provide a similar definition. They state that "Child sexual abuse consists of two overlapping, but distinguishable types of interactions: (a) forced or coerced sexual behavior imposed on a child, and (b) sexual activity between a child and a much older person, whether or not obvious coercion is involved (a common definition of much older is 5 or more years)" (p. 66). Finklehor (1982) concludes that the form of child abuse known

as sexual abuse is distinct and should be researched separately from the other forms of abuse. It has been found recently that many more adults admit to a history of childhood sexual victimization. Sexual abuse can occur to both male and female children. This paper will only deal with the female victims. A review of the literature on the impact of childhood sexual abuse revealed that "adult women victimized as children are more likely to manifest depression, self-destructive behavior, anxiety, feelings of isolation and stigma, feelings of low self-esteem, tendency toward revictimization, and substance abuse" (Browne & Finklehor, 1986, p. 72).

Outcomes Related to Childhood Incestuous Abuse

Much of the literature on sexual abuse deals with the type of sexual abuse known as incest. Incest occurs when sexual contact is between two members of the same family, be the relationship biological or that of a stepfamily.

The effects that the trauma of sexual molestation has on a girl as she grows into adulthood are varied in type and degree. When the effects of the victimization are highly traumatic, this may be related to perceptual disturbances. In looking at the contents of hallucinations experienced by female adult survivors of incest, Ellenson (1986) found that the hallucinations took a variety of sensory forms: visual, tactile, somatic, olfactory, or auditory. The auditory hallucinations took either psychosensorial auditory or psychic auditory forms. The psychosensorial auditory

hallucinations were defined as the client's reports of hearing intruder sounds and/or vocal sounds, whereas, psychic auditory hallucinations were more elaborate than the psychosensorial hallucinations. The auditory hallucinations were usually vocal sounds which were either "(1) persecutory, (2) directive (or) (3) inner helper voices" (p. 153).

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), can result when an individual experiences a trauma at one point in time, yet continues to be affected by that trauma at a later point in time even though the cause of the trauma is no longer present. It is another severe outcome which may be related to childhood incestuous victimization. This assumption is supported by a study which included 17 women who were victims of incest. The average duration of the abuse was seven years and perpetrated by the father figure of the victim in the majority of the cases. The average age of the women was 29 years. Of these 17 women, all had difficulties functioning in their adult lives due to PTSD which appeared to be related to the incestuous abuse (Lindberg & Distad, 1985).

Another study, which suggests that the effects of child sexual abuse can be long term and deeply disturbing, looked at the relationship of a Borderline Personality Disorder diagnosis and the presence of incestuous experience. Thirty individuals from a private psychiatric practice were identified as having been sexually abused as children. Just over one half of these subjects had a primary diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. A large proportion of these

women were victimized by their father or stepfather. This finding suggests that there may be an "association between the experience of incest as a child and adult behavioral manifestations reflective of the diagnosis of Borderline Personality" (Bernard & Hirsh, 1985, pp. 717-8).

Aside from PTSD and Borderline Personality Disorder being possibly related to the incest experience, it is apparent that abuse by a father or a father figure has a significantly more negative impact on the molested child when compared to sexual abuse perpetrated by a nonfather figure. It appears that victims of incest reported significantly less cohesive and less adaptable families of origin, greater perception of social isolation, and poorer social adjustment. When the abuse included intercourse with the paternal figure, the maladjustment was even greater (Harter, Alexander, & Neimeyer, 1988).

Research by Sedney and Brooks (1984) supports the findings concerning the impact of sexual abuse when it is incestuous. In a sample of 301 college women, 16 percent reported a history of childhood sexual experience. The women who had been victims of sexual abuse as children reported significantly greater symptoms related to depression, anxiety, and self-destructive behavior. Women who had sexual experiences within the family were at greater risk for disturbance than women whose experience occurred outside the home.

A Comparison of Clinical and Nonclinical Samples

There are not only differences in adulthood functioning between women sexually abused during childhood by family members and women abused by nonfamily members, differences have also been found between women who seek treatment for the abuse experience and women who do not. Tsai, Feldman-Summers, and Edgar (1979) studied three groups of women: (1) a clinical group currently seeking treatment for childhood molestation; (2) a nonclinical group of women molested as children, who considered themselves well adjusted and not in need of treatment; and (3) a control group of nonabused women. The first major finding of this study was that women seeking treatment were significantly less well adjusted than the other two groups. Secondly, reports of molestation incidents significantly differed between the clinical and nonclinical groups. The clinical group members were significantly older when their last molestation occurred, and the frequency and duration of the molestations they experienced were much greater than the nonclinical group of sexually abused women. The authors concluded that women molested as children differ substantially in later adult adjustment. The clinical group had elevated scores on the Psychopathic Deviate and Schizophrenia scales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. The clinical group also reported more sex partners, fewer orgasms, and less satisfaction with sexual relationships than the other two groups. These differences between the groups related to

the frequency and duration of molestation and the age of the victim when last molested. The findings suggest that childhood sexual molestation is not always associated with major adjustment problems and that it is possible to have experienced sexual molestation as a child, but enter adulthood as well adjusted as women who have never been molested. However, what this study fails to include is a group of women with backgrounds similar to the clinical group who have not sought therapy. The authors do mention that the differences between the clinical and nonclinical groups may not necessarily be due to the molestation, but to other factors which were not controlled. Thus, "differences in adjustment might have resulted in differential recall of the molestation incident...molested women who responded to media advertisements might not be representative of molested women in general...self-report and retrospective data may be influenced by conscious distortion and/or memory deficit," (p. 416).

Another comparison of clinical (patient sample) and nonclinical (community sample) populations of sexually abused women, found that victims who had experienced forceful or repeated abuse or severe physical violation (especially those abused by much older men; father or stepfather) were more likely to report persistent difficulties in their adult lives. Women in the patient sample reported childhood abuse experiences similar to those in the community sample, abuse that was violent, began relatively early in childhood, or

lasted a long time, most commonly at the hands of a father or a stepfather. The milder experiences reported by the well recovered women in the community sample were not found in the patient sample (Herman, Russell & Trochi, 1986). These results are consistent with the earlier findings discussed.

Some of the victims of childhood sexual abuse may not desire treatment for the abuse experience when they enter adulthood, and may even find their adjustment to adulthood to be very similar to their nonabused counterparts. However, there are still significant differences between these two groups that may be a result of childhood sexual abuse. Briere and Runtz (1988) had 278 female undergraduates complete Finklehor's survey of childhood experiences and two versions of the Hopkins Symptom Checklist. It was found that there was "significant psychological symptomatology associated with childhood history of sexual abuse in a non-clinical sample...(the abused women) reported higher levels of acute and chronic dissociation and somatization, along with greater anxiety and depression than did a comparison group of non-abused women" (p. 54).

The women with histories of molestation who were part of a nonclinical group were more likely to differ significantly from nonabused women in their functioning, if the following factors were present in their victimization experiences: victimization which included genital contact, use of force and aggression by the perpetrator, and/or victimization by the father or the father figure (Browne & Finklehor, 1986). The authors concluded that regardless of the severity, having

a history of childhood sexual abuse placed the victim at risk for a variety of emotional problems during adulthood.

Learned Helplessness and Attribution Styles

In order to understand further the detrimental affects that childhood sexual victimization has on functioning during adulthood, it is necessary to explore the relationship that childhood sexual victimization has to other forms of prolonged victimization. During prolonged victimization, the victim most likely experiences the phenomenon of "learned helplessness" which carries over into adulthood. The experience of victimization has longer lasting effects due to the psychological impact of the episode(s).

Uncontrollability of the original events (sexual victimization during childhood) is crucial for the development of subsequent deficits. Uncontrollability over the onset and termination of the victimizing events is one of the defining characteristics of a victimization episode.

"When uncontrollable events precede helpless behavior, and when the helpless individual expects future responding to be futile it may well be that learned helplessness is operative". (Peterson & Seligman, 1983, p. 107). When people are subjected to trauma over which they have little to no control, the result is often a disruption of the development of self-concept, generally affecting one's feeling of future uncontrollability and victimization (i.e., vulnerability) (Peterson & Seligman, 1983). The attributions one assigns to events may have significant impact. Cause may

be interpreted as internal or external; stable or unstable; global or specific. If a person explains the "bad" event by an internal factor, self esteem loss may occur. Stability of causal beliefs affects the onset and duration of helplessness and depression following a bad event. If the event is explained by a stable cause, maladaptive reactions to the event will persist; if explained by an unstable cause, reactions will be short-lived. If one believes that a global factor has caused the bad event, then helplessness deficits will occur in a variety of situations. Causal explanations are determined both by situational and dispositional factors. Repeated victimization of the same person seems likely to produce internal, stable, and global attributions (Peterson & Seligman, 1983).

Gold (1986) found that women who were sexually victimized in childhood and who reported psychological distress and low self-esteem were likely to display an attribution style marked by internal, stable, global attributions for bad events. It was theorized that coping difficulties of some of the victims may be due to their attributions for bad events. These victims expect to continue to experience negative events over which they perceive they have little to no control; therefore, they do not attempt to cope with these events in a healthy constructive manner. In Gold's (1986) study, the victimized individual's present perception of the abusive experience and her perception of her mother's response to it were the only

aspects of the victimization experience that were significantly related to adult functioning.

Tennen and Herzberger (1987) looked at how depression and self-esteem were affected by the absence of self-protective attributional biases, which include "taking credit for success (through internal, stable, global attributions) and disowning failure (through external, unstable, specific attributions), whereas depressed subjects seem to be more attributionally evenhanded." (p. 72). They found that self-esteem was the best predictor of depressive attributional style. For positive outcomes in situations, self-esteem predicted the locus, stability, and globality of the subjects' attributions. Subjects "with high self-esteem attributed positive...outcomes to internal factors and believed such outcomes would continue..." (p. 76). Self-esteem predicted feelings of helplessness and guilt, whereas those with lower self-esteem felt more personally responsible and helpless in situations which had negative outcomes than did the individuals who possessed high self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem tended to make internal attributions for failure and external, unstable, specific attributions for success. This occurred independent of the individual's level of depression.

The current study was designed to identify differences in adulthood functioning between women sexually abused during childhood (SAC) and women who were not abused in childhood (NAC) in the area of coping with interpersonal conflict. For

the purpose of this study, sexual abuse is defined as any sexual experience, ranging from being shown pornographic material to having sexual intercourse that occurred before age 12 with a person over age 12, or that occurred after 12, but before age 18 with a person over 18 years old. In cases where the victim was over age 15 and the perpetrator was less than five years older than the victim, the sexual experience had to be reported as unwanted by the victim to be considered sexual abuse.

It was predicted that women who were sexually abused as children would display poorer coping strategies than women not abused as children. On the Coping Styles Inventory, it was expected that the SAC group would score lower than the NAC group on the following scales: problem solving, cognitive restructuring, social support and express emotion. It was also expected that the SAC group would score higher on the scales that follow: problem avoidance, wishful thinking, social withdrawal, and self criticism.

The second hypothesis was that women who were sexually abused during childhood would be deficient in their abilities to effectively problem solve. It was predicted that the NAC group would score lower than the SAC group on all three subscales of the Problem Solving Inventory, as lower scores indicate greater perceived problem solving ability.

The third hypothesis was that women who were sexually abused as children have greater difficulty being assertive in social situations than do women who did not experience abuse

during childhood. It was predicted that the SAC group would score lower than the NAC group on the questions pertaining to assertiveness on the Dating and Assertion Questionnaire.

The fourth hypothesis was that women who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood were more likely to be less comfortable in dating situations than women who never experienced abuse. It was expected that the SAC group would score lower on the questions pertaining to dating situations on the DAQ than would the NAC group.

The fifth and last hypothesis was that women who experienced sexual abuse as children were expected to attribute internal stable and global causes to negative events in their lives, more often than nonabused women.

METHOD

Subjects

A sample of 70 women participated in this study. The subjects in the SAC group were recruited from several self-help groups designed for women who were molested as children, sexually assaulted as adults, and/or parents of children who were molested. These subjects were also recruited from several local mental health facilities on a volunteer basis. The women in the NAC group were recruited on a volunteer basis from several local mental health facilities. All of the subjects who were recruited from the mental health facilities were employees of those facilities.

Information was obtained on the age, marital status, occupation, and level of education of each subject (see Table 1). The groups did not differ in age, marital status or occupation; however, they were different in the level of education they had attained (see Results section).

Each woman in the SAC group reported information which described one, two, or three molestation experiences by different perpetrators. These experiences varied in frequency and duration. Of those who reported at least one molestation experience, 14 stated that they were molested by a nonfamily member and 19 were molested by a relative (two did not report their relationship to the perpetrator). None

Table 1

Demographic Information: Age (Means and Standard Deviations),
Marital Status, Occupation and Level of Education
(Frequencies) for the SAC and NAC Groups.

	Sexually Abused in Childhood (SAC)	Not Abused in Childhood (NAC)
Age	<u>M</u> =33.4, <u>SD</u> =8.00	<u>M</u> =32.4, <u>SD</u> =8.96
Marital Status		
Single	9	12
Married	15	19
Divorced/Separated	11	4
Occupation		
Education/ Counseling Field	23	30
Business Field	7	3
Not Reported	5	2
Highest Level of Education		
Some High School	1	0
Completed High School	7	1
Some College	7	2
Undergraduate Degree	14	21
Graduate or Professional Degree	6	10

of the perpetrators in these reports were the victim's father or stepfather. Some of the subjects (22 of 35) reported a second molestation experience. Ten of these women were molested by a nonfamily member and 12 were molested by a relative. Two of the 12, molested by a relative, were molested by their stepfathers. Twelve of the 35 women reported that they were molested by a third perpetrator. Seven of these women were molested by a nonfamily member and five were molested by a relative; one of which was molested by her stepfather. Only two of the 35 subjects in the SAC group reported that sexual intercourse occurred between themselves and the perpetrator. Seven of the 35 women stated that they were threatened or forced by the first perpetrator, six of twenty-two reported that they were threatened or forced by the second perpetrator, and two of 12 indicated that they were threatened or forced by the third perpetrator. Eight of the women reported that they were molested more than ten times by the first perpetrator, five were molested more than ten times by the second perpetrator, and six were molested more than ten times by the third perpetrator. There were three subjects who stated that the first perpetrator molested them for longer than one year in duration; three reported that the molestation experience with the second perpetrator occurred longer than a one year period; and of those who reported a molestation experience with a third perpetrator, two indicated that this experience was longer than one year. Sixteen of the women stated that they

received (some or much) support from mother and 19 received (some or much) support from father. Those who reported multiple incidents, received decreasing support from mother (9 of 22 for the second incident and 3 of 12 for the third incident). Support from father was more erratic. It is not known, however, if the incidents reported were in chronological order or the amount of support these subjects may have received from the other adults they told about the abuse.

Materials

Each subject completed a packet containing an interview form, (see Appendix A) which was an abridged form taken from Gold's study (1986), the Problem Solving Inventory (Heppner & Peterson, 1982), the Dating and Assertion Questionnaire (Levenson & Gottman, 1978), the Attribution Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982), and the Coping Styles Inventory (Tobin, Holroyd & Reynolds, 1984).

The interview form was used to collect demographic information on the subject's family background, personal history, childhood sexual experiences, and evidence of sexual abuse, if any.

The subjects also completed the Problem Solving Inventory (PSI) (Heppner, 1982), (see Appendix B). This 35-item instrument is designed to assess the subject's perceptions of her problem solving behaviors. The PSI has three subscales: Problem Solving Confidence, Approach Avoidance Style, and Personal Control. For

reliability, alphas have been found to range from .72 to .85 on the subscales and .90 for the total measure (Heppner & Peterson, 1982). Significant correlations were found between the PSI and the self rating scales of one's problem solving skills. The PSI correlated with measures with which it should be correlated and not with those with which it should not be correlated. (Rotter's Internal-External and the Meyer's-Briggs Type Indicator were included in the validity studies), (Heppner & Peterson, 1982).

The Dating and Assertion Questionnaire (DAQ) (Levenson & Gottman, 1978); (see Appendix C), is an 18-item scale designed to measure social competence. Half of the items measure assertion skills, and the other half measure the social skills of dating. For reliability, Levenson and Gottman reported the coefficient alpha for the dating scale to be .92 and for the assertion scale .85. The DAQ's validity is supported by significant differences found between a clinical and nonclinical sample, as well as, between a group of people known to have dating and assertion problems and a control group.

The Attribution Style Questionnaire (ASQ) is a 60-item scale designed to measure individual differences in the use of attributional dimensions (internal or external, stable or unstable and global or specific). Subjects are asked to imagine themselves in a variety of situations (12 total).

For each situation, they write down a major cause and evaluate it according to the dimensions of attribution. Twelve scores are obtained in the following areas: three scores for positive achievement events, three scores for negative achievement events, three scores for positive affiliation events, and three scores for negative affiliation events. The three scores for each of the four types of events are derived from the level of internalization, stability, and globality used by each of the subjects in each of the four areas. Internal consistency was found to be .75 for the composite attributional style for bad events. The ASQ was found to predict which college students would develop depressive symptoms (Peterson et al., 1982). When used in learned helplessness studies, "the specific role hypothesized for the stability dimension is supported..."(Peterson, et al., 1982, p.297).

The last questionnaire in the packet is the Coping Styles Inventory (CSI) (Tobin, Holroyd & Reynolds, 1984); (see Appendix E). It consists of 72 self-report items designed to look at the strategies that people use to deal with stressful events. It is broken into eight primary subscales: Problem Solving (PS), Cognitive Restructuring (CR), Social Support (SS), Express Emotion (EE), Problem Avoidance (PA), Wishful Thinking (WT), Social Withdrawal (SW), and Self Criticism (SC). For reliability, the alpha coefficient ranged from .71 to .94 (Tobin, Holroyd, & Reynolds, 1984). Differences found between various

symptomatic and normal samples were assessed using the CSI. The CSI was found to predict performances of individuals with varying degrees of depressive symptoms and self-efficacy (Tobin et al., 1984). In the current study, the instructions were modified in order to control for the type of stressful situation to which each subject would respond. Instead of thinking of their own examples, the subjects were given one of two scenarios depicting a situation of interpersonal conflict. Each subject either received a scenario which involved a female friend or a male friend. After reading the scenario, the subjects were asked to complete the CSI. This was the only questionnaire in the packet that introduced the second independent variable of gender into the study.

Procedure

The subjects were recruited on an individual basis from self-help groups and mental health facilities. Each subject was given a verbal and written explanation of the purpose of the study; no deception was used in this explanation. Each subject signed an informed consent form prior to answering the questionnaires. In the consent form, it was made clear to the subject that she was not obligated to participate in the study and was free to end participation at any time. It was also specified that all of the participants would remain anonymous and the materials would remain confidential. The subjects were asked not to include their names on any of the questionnaires. After signing the consent forms, the subjects were instructed to complete the questionnaire

packets independently and return them within a week. They were asked not to discuss their answers until the study had been completed. The experimenter provided a telephone number should any of the women have questions or concerns; names and numbers of other support people (facilitators of self-help groups) were provided for subjects who were not currently attending a self-help group.

RESULTS

Interview Questionnaire

Analysis of the information obtained in the interview questionnaire revealed that the two groups did not differ in age ($t(65) = .12$, $p > .05$). They were also found to be similar in marital status ($\chi^2(2, N=70) = 4.17$, $p > .05$) and in their occupations ($\chi^2(4, N=70) = 3.81$, $p > .05$). The two groups did differ in their level of education ($\chi^2(4, N=70) = 10.68$, $p < .05$). It appears that more of the subjects in the NAC group had attained an undergraduate or graduate degree than had the subjects in the SAC group.

Four separate analyses were performed on the data. One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed to compare the SAC and NAC individuals on the dependent variables of dating, assertiveness, problem solving confidence, problem solving approach-avoidance style and perceived personal control when problem solving. Two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were performed on the attribution style variables, one on the achievement variables and one on the affiliative variables. A 2x2, abuse x stimulus person gender, analysis of general linear models (GLM) with the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) option was used to analyze the measures obtained from the Coping Styles Inventory.

Problem Solving Inventory

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant main effect for abuse on the dependent variable of perceived control when dealing with problem situations. The NAC and SAC groups did not differ in their perceived problem solving confidence, or their degree of approach-avoidance style in relation to problem situations. As illustrated in Table 2, the SAC group perceived that they had less personal control when problem solving than did the NAC group.

Dating and Assertion Questionnaire

On the Assertion Subscale, as can be seen in Table 3, the two groups did not differ in their abilities to be assertive in social situations. On the Dating Subscale, both the NAC group and the SAC group members viewed themselves as equally competent in dating situations.

Attributional Style Questionnaire

A significant multivariate $F(6,63)=2.61, p=.03$ was found for the Achievement subscale of the Attributional Style Questionnaire. As can be seen in Table 4, the analysis of variance revealed a significant univariate F statistic for the effect of abuse on the internalization dimension of the dependent variable, good achievement events. The NAC group was more likely than the SAC group to explain good achievement events as internally caused. That is, the NAC group members were more inclined than the members of the SAC group to attribute their successful accomplishments to

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F(1,68) of Problem Solving Inventory Measures for the SAC and NAC Groups.

Subscales	Sexually Abused in Childhood (SAC)		Not Abused in Childhood (NAC)		<u>F</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Confidence	23.34	8.36	22.94	7.64	0.04
Approach Avoidance	41.17	15.14	39.00	10.05	0.50
Control	17.17	5.37	14.26	4.45	5.30*
Total Mean Score	81.00		75.00		

* $p < .05$

Note. Lower scores reflect greater perceived problem solving ability.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F(1,68) of the Dating and Assertion Questionnaire Measures for SAC and NAC groups.

Subscale	Sexually Abused in Childhood (SAC)		Not Abused in Childhood (NAC)		<u>F</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Assertion	6.07	1.17	6.53	0.80	3.62
Dating	5.74	1.35	6.20	0.82	3.01

* $p < .05$

Note. Higher scores reflect greater perceptions of competence.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F(1,68) of the Attribution Style Questionnaire Achievement Scales for the SAC and NAC Groups.

Subscales	Sexually Abused in Childhood (SAC)		Not Abused in Childhood (NAC)		<u>F</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Good Achievement Internalization	4.92	1.18	5.49	1.05	4.62*
Good Achievement Stability	5.45	1.10	5.71	1.01	1.13
Good Achievement Globality	5.11	1.29	5.70	0.96	4.70*
Bad Achievement Internalization	5.02	1.32	4.29	1.11	5.26*
Bad Achievement Stability	4.67	1.01	4.11	1.08	5.12*
Bad Achievement Globality	4.49	1.47	3.73	1.21	5.52*

* $p < .05$

Note. Higher scores reflect greater use of this attributional dimension.

their own efforts rather, than to other people or circumstances. A significant effect was also found for the globality dimension of the dependent variable good achievement events. As seen in Table 4, the SAC group was less likely than the NAC group to view achievement of good events as affecting many other aspects of their lives. The women in the SAC group were inclined to see their successes as isolated incidents more so than the women in the NAC group.

For all three levels of the bad achievement event variables, the SAC group and the NAC group differed significantly. For bad achievement events, the SAC group members were more likely to view these events as being caused by something internal and stable, and affecting many areas of their lives than the NAC members. When the SAC women failed to achieve, they were more inclined than the NAC women to attribute their failures as due to themselves, always present in their lives, and affecting many aspects of their lives.

The groups did not differ significantly in their attributions for good or bad affiliative events, which is in opposition to the predictions of this study. It was expected that the SAC group would attribute bad affiliative events to internal, stable, global causes, and positive affiliative events to external, unstable, specific causes (see Table 5).

Coping Styles Inventory

The Coping Styles Inventory, (CSI) was the only measure which introduced the second independent variable

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F(1,68) of the Attribution Style Questionnaire Affiliation Scales for the SAC and NAC Groups.

Subscales	Sexually Abused in Childhood (SAC)		Not Abused in Childhood (NAC)		<u>F</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Good Affiliation Internalization	5.23	0.72	5.43	0.78	1.15
Good Affiliation Stability	5.25	0.89	5.54	0.80	2.11
Good Affiliation Globality	5.29	0.99	5.46	0.92	0.58
Bad Affiliation Internalization	4.17	1.17	3.68	0.68	3.98
Bad Affiliation Stability	4.16	0.82	3.85	0.67	3.05
Bad Affiliation Globality	3.96	1.35	3.54	1.11	1.48

*p<.05

Note. Higher scores reflect greater use of this attributional dimension.

of Gender (male vs. female stimulus person presented in the scenarios of the CSI). It was predicted that the subjects in the SAC group would have greater difficulty dealing with conflict when it involved a male friend. It was also expected that the members of the SAC group would find it more difficult to cope with interpersonal conflict, regardless of the stimulus person's gender, than would the subjects in the NAC group. However, the MANOVA did not yield a significant main effect, multivariate $F(8,59)=1.47$, $p=.19$ for the overall abuse effect, for the overall Gender effect, multivariate $F(8,59)=.44$, $p=.89$, or for the overall interaction effect, multivariate $F(8,59)=.39$, $p=.96$.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirmed some of the hypothesized differences between women who were sexually abused during childhood and women who were not abused. Differences between these two groups were found in their responses to the Problem Solving Inventory and the Attribution Style Questionnaire.

The first hypothesis was not supported by the data, in that, the groups were not found to differ significantly in their abilities to cope with interpersonal conflict with a friend. Much of this is probably due to the relatively healthy sample of women who participated in the study. The women in the SAC group were receiving group therapy or were employed in a mental health facility where assistance in solving their problems was readily available. Social problem solving is a cognitive behavioral process by which the individual identifies and implements effective means of coping with problem situations which occur in life. Ineffective problem solvers reported significantly higher state and trait anxiety than the effective problem solvers in a study done by Nezu (1986). The overall conclusion drawn indicates that the effects of stress can be moderated by problem solving ability. Thus, it is likely that women attending the self-help groups were receiving information

and/or practice related to effective problem solving. This may have helped these women score similarly to the NAC group on the Coping Styles Inventory. In a study which included groups of women who were not sexually abused, women who were sexually abused only during childhood, women who were sexually abused only during adulthood, and women who were sexually abused both in childhood and adulthood (multiple sexual assault group), it was found that the multiple sexual assault group had the highest score on the interpersonal sensitivity scale, the depression scale, the anxiety scale, and the general severity scale of the Derogatis Symptoms Checklist-90 Revised of the four groups in the study. The other three groups were not as strikingly different from one another (Murphy et al., 1988). Only four subjects in the current study reported sexual victimization after age 18. This is another indication that the women in the SAC group may have developed similar coping strategies to their nonabused counterparts.

The women who were molested as children were found to be more limited in their problem solving skills. These findings are supported by Finklehor (1986) and Nezu (1986) in their studies concerning the effects of sexual abuse and of effective problem solvers, respectively. As predicted in the second hypothesis, the women in SAC group did perceive significantly less

personal control than the NAC group when problem solving. However, the groups did not differ in their problem solving confidence or their approach-avoidance style to problem situations. This lack of difference may be explained by what was previously discussed in relation to the CSI scores. The SAC group may be a healthier sample of sexually abused women when compared to the general population of abused women. They may be acquiring the necessary skills for effective problem solving in the self-help groups they are attending. Their significantly lower perceived personal control when problem solving may relate back to the helplessness experienced during the abuse (Browne & Finklehor, 1986; Peterson & Seligman, 1983).

The women in both groups scored above the mid-range on the assertiveness subscales of the DAQ and did not differ. Thus, the third hypothesis, which predicted that the SAC group would be significantly less assertive than the NAC group was not supported. Norms previously established for the scale (Heppner & Peterson, 1982) were appropriate for people who were in need of assertiveness skills training; there was no norm group of adequately assertive people with which to compare the NAC and SAC groups. The lack of difference between the two groups may be due to the work the SAC subjects have done in group therapy, or in the types of careers they have chosen. These experiences have possibly helped these women to develop effective assertiveness skills regardless of their experiences with childhood sexual abuse.

The lack of differences between the two groups may also be related to the women in the SAC group having had opportunities to ventilate feelings about being sexually abused. Wyatt and Mickey (1987) found in their study, which included 61 women who had been sexually abused during childhood, that higher rates of recovery and feelings of control over one's life were positively correlated with the ability to ventilate and be supported by the adult(s) who was (were) hearing about the abuse. It is possible that many of these women did receive support from an adult (27.3% stated that they felt responsible for causing the abuse at the time it occurred; 72.7% placed responsibility for the abuse on the perpetrator or some other person). There is a strong possibility that the support these women received at the time of the abuse (or at some point after the abuse occurred) and the lack of self blame reported by the majority contributed to their similarity to the nonabused subjects in the study.

The fourth hypothesis was not supported, in that, the two groups did not differ significantly in their scores on the dating subscale (rating social competence in dating situations) of the DAQ. Once again, both groups scored relatively high in their social competence. High social competence scores may in part reflect that approximately 43% of the sexually abused subjects were married. Also, the majority of women were approximately 33 years of age and attending a self-help group. Alexander and Lupfer (1987) found no evidence of the sexually molested subjects in their

study having problems during adulthood with sexual satisfaction. This suggests the possibility that the problems that these women are facing as adults may not always involve difficulties in the area of male-female relationships or specifically to confidence in dating relationships.

The fifth and final hypothesis was partially supported by the data. When making positive achievements in their lives, the women who experienced childhood sexual abuse were more apt to attribute such achievements to external, unstable, specific causes while the nonabused women attributed such successes to more internal causes. However, when failing to achieve goals, the women who had been abused during childhood were more inclined to place full blame on themselves and viewed such situations as being internally caused, stable in their lives, and affecting many areas of their lives more often than did the women who had not been sexually abused. These findings are consistent with those reported by Tennen and Herzberger (1987) who connected low self-esteem with an individual's tendency to attribute internal causes for failures and external causes for successes. Gold (1986) also reported that women who had been victimized as children perceived that they had little control over bad events and expected that these events would continue to occur. Although the groups differed significantly on several of the achievement subscales of the ASQ, it was surprising to find that the groups did not differ

significantly on the affiliative scales, as such a difference was predicted and supported by the literature. As mentioned earlier, the SAC group consisted of relatively high functioning women who had chosen to get help and/or were successful in maintaining careers in the mental health field. Other possible explanations for this lack of difference are: the broad definition of childhood sexual abuse used in this study, the high level of education of the women in both groups, (77.1% of the women in the SAC group had at least some college education, and 94.2% of the women in the NAC group had at least some college education), and the low numbers of women in the SAC group having factors related to their abuse experiences (i.e., father figure as perpetrator, prolonged abuse...) which were found in the literature to have the greatest impact on the sexually abused child well into her adult life. Only three subjects reported an abuse by stepfather and none of the subjects reported abuse by natural father.

The findings of this research indicate that differences do exist between adult women with a history of childhood sexual abuse and women who were not abused during childhood. Although the SAC group was similar to the NAC group in the areas of coping with interpersonal conflict, comfort with dating, and assertiveness, differences were found in the areas of problem solving and attributional styles. The SAC group members perceived less personal control in problem situations and tended to attribute their good achievements to

external, unstable, specific causes and their bad achievements to internal, stable, global causes. Further research should look at both clinical and nonclinical samples of sexually abused women, as well as nonabused women, in their abilities to cope with a variety of situations involving interpersonal conflict during adulthood. The effects of therapy (degrees and types), education, career choice, and marital status should also be investigated. It will also be necessary to pinpoint which types of molestation experiences and environmental factors relate to specific difficulties in coping and problem solving strategies used in dealing with interpersonal conflict.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A

1. Your age at last birthday _____
2. Present marital status (circle one answer number);
 1. Single
 2. Married
 3. Separated or divorced
 4. Widowed
3. Number of times you have been married:
 1. Never
 2. Once
 3. Twice
 4. Three or more times
4. How many children do you have? _____
5. How many children presently live with you? _____
6. What is your present occupation and the occupation of your spouse?

Self _____

Spouse _____
7. What is your annual income and your spouse's annual income before taxes?

Self	Spouse	
0	0	Not employed
1	1	less than \$10,000
2	2	\$10,000 to \$19,999
3	3	\$20,000 to \$29,999
4	4	\$30,000 to \$39,999
5	5	\$40,000 to \$49,999
6	6	\$50,000 and over
X	X	Don't know
8. What is the highest level of education that you and your spouse have attained?

Self	Spouse	
1	1	Some grade school
2	2	Completed grade school

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | Some high school |
| 4 | 4 | Completed high school |
| 5 | 5 | High school and some training but not college |
| 6 | 6 | Some college |
| 7 | 7 | Completed college |
| 8 | 8 | Some graduate work |
| 9 | 9 | Graduate or professional degree |

We would like to gather some information about members in your family.

9. a. Is your father:
 1. Living with your mother
 2. Divorced or separated from her
 3. Widowed
 4. Living apart for some other reason
 5. Deceased
 - b. When you last lived with your father, how close did you feel to him?
 1. Very close
 2. Close
 3. Somewhat close
 4. Not close
 5. Distant
10. Did you also have a stepfather?
 1. Yes 2. No (If no, go to question 11)
 - a. Is your stepfather:
 1. Living with your mother
 2. Divorced or separated from your mother
 3. Widowed
 4. Living apart for some other reason
 5. Deceased
 - b. When you last lived with him, how close did you feel to him?
 1. Very close
 2. Close
 3. Somewhat close
 4. Not close
 5. Distant
11. a. Is your mother:
 1. Living with your father
 2. Divorced or separated from your father
 3. Widowed
 4. Living apart for some other reason

- 5. Deceased
 - b. When you last lived with her, how close did you feel to her?
 - 1. Very close
 - 2. Close
 - 3. Somewhat close
 - 4. Not close
 - 5. Distant
12. Did you also have a stepmother?
- 1. Yes 2. No (If no, go to question 13)
 - a. Is she:
 - 1. Living with your father
 - 2. Divorced or separated from your father
 - 3. Widowed
 - 4. Living apart for some other reason
 - 5. Deceased
 - b. When you last lived with her, how close did you feel to her?
 - 1. Very close
 - 2. Close
 - 3. Somewhat close
 - 4. Not close
 - 5. Distant
13. When you were 12 did you have:
- 1. Many good friends
 - 2. A few good friends
 - 3. One or two good friends
 - 4. No good friends

PART B

It is now generally realized that most people have sexual experiences as children and while they are still growing up. Some of these are with friends and playmates, and some with relatives and family members. Some are very upsetting and painful, and some are not. Some influence peoples' later lives and sexual experiences, and some are practically forgotten. Although these are often important events, very little is actually known about them.

We would like you to try to remember the sexual experiences you had while growing up. By "sexual", we mean a broad range of things, anything from playing

"doctor" to sexual intercourse - anything that might have seemed sexual to you.

14. Did you have any of the following experiences before age 12? (Circle any that apply)

- a. An invitation or request to do something sexual.
- b. Kissing and hugging in a sexual way.
- c. Another person showing you his/her sex organs.
- d. You showing your sex organs to another person.
- e. Another person fondling you in a sexual way.
- f. You fondling another person in a sexual way.
- g. Another person touching your sex organs in a sexual way.
- h. You touching another person's sex organs in a sexual way.
- i. Intercourse, but without attempting penetration.
- j. Intercourse.
- k. Other _____

Now we want to ask you to think of three sexual experiences - or however many up to three - that you had before the age of 12 with an adult or adolescent over 12 including strangers, friends, or family members like cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, mother or father. Choose the three most important to you and answer the following questions.

15. How many such experiences did you have? _____
(If none, go to question 34)

With regard to the first experience:

16. About how old were you at the time?

Experience #1	Experience #2	Experience #3
_____	_____	_____

17. About how old was the other person?

Experience #1	Experience #2	Experience #3
_____	_____	_____

18. Was the other person:

Circle 1 for male

2 for female

1	2	1	2	1	2
---	---	---	---	---	---

19. Was the other person:

a stranger	1	1	1
a person you knew, but not			
a friend	2	2	2
a friend of yours	3	3	3
a friend of your parents	4	4	4
a cousin	5	5	5
an uncle or aunt	6	6	6
a grandparent	7	7	7
a brother	8	8	8
a sister	9	9	9
a father	10	10	10
a stepfather	11	11	11
a mother	12	12	12
a stepmother	13	13	13
a guardian	14	14	14

20. What happened?

	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. An invitation or request to do something sexual.	1	0	1	0	1	0
b. Kissing and hugging in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
c. Another person showing you his/her sex organs	1	0	1	0	1	0
d. You showing your sex organs to another person	1	0	1	0	1	0
e. Another person fondling you in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
f. You fondling another person in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
g. Another person touching your sex organs in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
h. You touching another person's sex organs in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
i. Intercourse, but without attempting penetration.	1	0	1	0	1	0
j. Intercourse.	1	0	1	0	1	0

- k. Other #1 _____
 #2 _____
 #3 _____
21. Who started this? 1. You 2. Other
 person 1 2 1 2 1 2
22. Did the other person
 threaten or force you?
 1. Yes 2. A little
 3. No 1 2 1 2 1 2
23. Did you threaten or
 force the other person? 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
 1. Yes 2. Little 3. No
24. About how many times did
 you have a sexual experience
 with this person? _____
25. Over how long a time did
 this go on? (Indicate
 number of days, months,
 years.) _____
26. Which of these would best
 describe your reaction
 at the time of the
 experience?
 1. Fear 2. Shock
 3. Surprise 4. Interest
 5. Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
27. Who did you tell about this experience
 if anyone?
 1. No one 1 1 1
 2. Mother 2 2 2
 3. Father 3 3 3
 4. Brother/Sister 4 4 4
 5. Friend 5 5 5
 6. Therapist/counselor 6 6 6
 7. Police 7 7 7
 8. Other adult 8 8 8
28. If mother, how did she
 react? (If you did not
 tell your mother, how

do you think she would
have reacted?)

- a. Angry at you 1. Very 2. Mildly
3. A little
4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
- B. Supportive of you
1. Very 2. Mildly
3. A little
4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

29. If father, how did he react?

(If you did not tell your
father, how do you think
he would have reacted?)

- a. Angry at you 1. Very
2. Mildly
3. A little
4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
- b. Supportive of you
1. Very 2. Mildly
3. A little
4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

30. In retrospect would you

say that this experience was

1. Positive 2. Mostly positive
3. Neutral 4. Mostly negative
5. Negative 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

31. Did you see the experience as

1. A challenge 2. A threat 1 2 1 2 1 2

32. Have you been able to find
some meaning for this
experience?

1. None 2. Some 3. Very Much 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

33. At the time whom did you

feel was mostly responsible

for causing this experience?

1. You 2. The other person
3. Your mother 4. Your father
5. Someone else 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Now go back to
question 16 and
answer the questions
about Experience #2.

Now go back to
question 16 and
answer the questions
about Experience #3

Now we would like you to think of sexual experiences that you had after the age of 12 with an adult, which you did not consent to. That is, a sexual experience which was forced on you, or done against your will, or which you didn't want to happen. This includes experiences with strangers, friends and relatives, such as cousins, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, grandparents, mother or father, or a guardian or a close friend of a parent. (If this relationship was described in the previous section, do not repeat it.) Choose the three most important to you and answer the following questions.

34. How many such experiences did you have? _____
(If none, go to the next questionnaire)

With regard to the first experience:

35. About how old were you at the time?

Experience #1	Experience #2	Experience #3
_____	_____	_____

36. About how old was the other person?

Experience #1	Experience #2	Experience #3
_____	_____	_____

37. Was the other person:
Circle 1 for male
2 for female

1	2	1	2	1	2
---	---	---	---	---	---

38. Was the other person:

a stranger	1	1	1
a person you knew, but not			
a friend	2	2	2
a friend of yours	3	3	3
a friend of your parents	4	4	4

a cousin	5	5	5
an uncle or aunt	6	6	6
a grandparent	7	7	7
a brother	8	8	8
a sister	9	9	9
a father	10	10	10
a stepfather	11	11	11
a mother	12	12	12
a stepmother	13	13	13
a guardian	14	14	14

39. What happened?

	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. An invitation or request to something sexual.	1	0	1	0	1	0
b. Kissing and hugging in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
c. Another person showing you his/her sex organs	1	0	1	0	1	0
d. You showing your sex organs to another person	1	0	1	0	1	0
e. Another person fondling you in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
f. You fondling another person in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
g. Another person touching your sex organs in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
h. You touching another person's sex organs in a sexual way.	1	0	1	0	1	0
i. Intercourse, but without attempting penetration.	1	0	1	0	1	0
j. Intercourse.	1	0	1	0	1	0
k. Other	#1					
	#2					
	#3					

40. Who started this? 1. You
2. Other person 1 2 1 2 1 2
41. Did the other person threaten or force you?
1. Yes 2. A little
3. No 1 2 1 2 1 2
42. Did you threaten or force the other person? 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
1. Yes 2. Little 3. No
43. About how many times did you have a sexual experience with this person? _____
44. Over how long a time did this go on? (Indicate number of days, months, years.) _____
45. Which of these would best describe your reaction at the time of the experience?
1. Fear 2. Shock
3. Surprise 4. Interest
5. Pleasure 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
46. Who did you tell about this experience if anyone?
1. No one 1 1 1
2. Mother 2 2 2
3. Father 3 3 3
4. Brother/Sister 4 4 4
5. Friend 5 5 5
6. Therapist/counselor 6 6 6
7. Police 7 7 7
8. Other adult 8 8 8
47. If mother, how did she react? (If you did not tell your mother, how do you think she would have reacted?)
a. Angry at you 1. Very 2. Mildly
3. A little
4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- b. Supportive of you
 1. Very 2. Mildly
 3. A little
 4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
48. If father, how did he react?
 (If you did not tell your father, how do you think he would have reacted?)
 a. Angry at you 1. Very
 2. Mildly
 3. A little
 4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
 b. Supportive of you
 1. Very 2. Mildly
 3. A little
 4. Not at all 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
49. In retrospect would you say that this experience was
 1. Positive 2. Mostly positive
 3. Neutral 4. Mostly negative
 5. Negative 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
50. Did you see the experience as
 1. A challenge 2. A threat 1 2 1 2 1 2
51. Have you been able to find some meaning for this experience?
 1. None 2. Some 3. Very Much 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
52. At the time whom did you feel was mostly responsible for causing this experience?
 1. You 2. The other person
 3. Your mother 4. Your father
 5. Someone else 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Now go back to
 question 35 and
 answer the questions
 about Experience #2.

Now go back to
 question 35 and
 answer the questions
 about Experience #3

APPENDIX B

PROBLEM SOLVING INVENTORY

Read each statement, and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement, using the following alternatives:

- 1 = Strongly agree
- 2 = Moderately agree
- 3 = Slightly agree
- 4 = Slightly disagree
- 5 = Moderately disagree
- 6 = Strongly disagree

- ___ 1. When a solution to a problem was unsuccessful, I did not examine why it didn't work.
- ___ 2. When I am confronted with a complex problem, I do not bother to develop a strategy to collect information so I can define exactly what the problem is.
- ___ 3. When my first efforts to solve a problem fail, I become uneasy about my ability to handle this situation.
- ___ 4. After I have solved a problem, I do not analyze what went right or what went wrong.
- ___ 5. I am usually able to think up creative and effective alternatives to solve a problem.
- ___ 6. After I have tried to solve a problem with a certain course of action, I take time and compare the actual outcome to what I think should have happened.
- ___ 7. When I have a problem, I think up as many ways to handle it as I can, until I can't come up with any more ideas.

- ___ 8. When confronted with a problem, I consistently examine my feelings to find out what is going on in the problem situation.
- ___ 9. When I am confused with a problem, I do not try to define vague ideas or feelings into concrete or specific terms.
- ___ 10. I have the ability to solve most problems even though initially no solution is immediately apparent.
- ___ 11. Many problems I face are too complex for me to solve.
- ___ 12. I make decisions and am happy with them later.
- ___ 13. When confronted with a problem, I tend to do the first thing that I can think of to solve it.
- ___ 14. Sometimes I do not take time to stop and deal with my problems, but just kind of muddle ahead.
- ___ 15. When deciding on an idea or possible solution to a problem, I do not take time to consider the chances of each alternative being successful.
- ___ 16. When confronted with a problem, I stop and think about it before deciding on the next step.
- ___ 17. I generally go with the first good idea that comes to my mind.
- ___ 18. When making a decision, I weigh the consequences of each alternative and compare them against each other.
- ___ 19. When I make plans to solve a problem, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
- ___ 20. I try to predict the overall result of carrying out a particular course of action.

- ___ 21. When I try to think up possible solutions to a problem, I do not come up with many alternatives.
- ___ 22. In trying to solve a problem, one strategy I often use is to think of past problems that have been similar.
- ___ 23. Given enough time and effort, I believe that I can solve most problems that confront me.
- ___ 24. When faced with a novel situations, I have confidence that I can handle problems that may arise.
- ___ 25. Even though I work on a problem, sometimes I feel like I am groping or wandering, and am not getting down to the real issue.
- ___ 26. I make snap judgments and later regret them.
- ___ 27. I trust my ability to solve new and difficult problems.
- ___ 28. I have a systematic method for comparing alternatives and making decisions.
- ___ 29. When I try to think of ways of handling a problem, I do not try to combine different ideas together.
- ___ 30. When confronted with a problem, I don't usually examine what sort of external things in my environment may be contributing to my problem.
- ___ 31. When I am confronted by a problem, one of the first things I do is survey the situation and consider all the relevant pieces of information.
- ___ 32. Sometimes I get so charged up emotionally, that I am unable to consider many ways of dealing with my problem.
- ___ 33. After making a decision, the outcome I expected usually matches the actual outcome.

- ___ 34. When confronted with a problem, I am unsure of whether I can handle the situation.
- ___ 35. When I become aware of a problem, one of the first things I do is try to find out exactly what the problem is.

APPENDIX C

DATING AND ASSERTION QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in finding out something about the likelihood of your acting in certain ways. Below you will find a list of specific behaviors that you may or may not exhibit. Use the following rating scale:

- 1 = I never do this
- 2 = I sometimes do this
- 3 = I often do this
- 4 = I do this almost always

Now next to each item on the following list, place a number which best indicates the likelihood of you behaving in that way. Be as objective as possible.

- ___ 1. Stand up for your rights.
- ___ 2. Maintain a long conversation with a member of the opposite sex.
- ___ 3. Be confident in your ability to succeed in a situation in which you have to demonstrate your competence.
- ___ 4. Say "no" when you feel like it.
- ___ 5. Get a second date with someone you have dated once.
- ___ 6. Assume a role of leadership.
- ___ 7. Be able to accurately sense how a member of the opposite sex feels about you.
- ___ 8. Have an intimate emotional relationship with a member of the opposite sex.
- ___ 9. Have an intimate physical relationship with a member of the opposite sex.

The following questions describe a variety of social situations that you might encounter. In each situation

you may feel "put on the spot." Some situations may be familiar to you, and others may not. We'd like you to read each situation and try to imagine yourself actually in the situation. The more vividly you get a mental picture and place yourself in the situation, the better. After each situation choose one of the numbers from 1 to 5 which best describes you, using the following the scale:

- 1 = I would be so uncomfortable and so unable to handle this situation that I would avoid it if possible.
- 2 = I would feel very uncomfortable and would have a lot of difficulty handling this situation.
- 3 = I would feel somewhat uncomfortable and would have some difficulty in handling this situation.
- 4 = I would feel quite comfortable and would be able to handle this situation fairly well.
- 5 = I would feel very comfortable and be able to handle this situation very well.

- ___ 10. You're waiting patiently in line at the checkout when a couple of people cut right in front of you. You feel very annoyed and want to tell them to wait their turn at the back of the line. One of them says, "look, you don't mind do you? But we're in a terrible hurry."
- ___ 11. You have enjoyed this date and would like to see your date again. The evening is coming to a close and you decide to say something.
- ___ 12. You are talking to a professor about dropping a class. You explain your situation, which you fabricate slightly for effect. Looking at his grade book, the professor comments that you are pretty far behind. You go into greater detail about why you are behind and why you'd like to be allowed to withdraw from his class. He then says, "I'm sorry, but it's against university policy to let you withdraw this late in the semester."
- ___ 13. You meet someone you don't know very well but are attracted to. You want ask him out on a date.

- ___ 14. You meet someone of the opposite sex at lunch and have a very enjoyable conversation. You'd like to get together again and decide to say something.
- ___ 15. Your roommate has several obnoxious traits that upset you very much. So far, you have mentioned them once or twice, but no noticeable changes have occurred. You still have three months left to live together. You decide to say something.
- ___ 16. You're with a small group of people who you don't know too well. Most of them are expressing a point of view that you disagree with. You'd like to state your opinion even if it means you'll probably be in the minority.
- ___ 17. You go to a party where you don't know many people. Someone of the opposite sex approaches you and introduces himself. You want to start a conversation and get to know him.
- ___ 18. You are trying to make an appointment with the dean. You are talking to his secretary face to face. She asks you what division you are in, and when you tell her, she starts asking you questions about the nature of your problem. You inquire as to why she is asking all these questions, and she replies very snobbishly that she is the person who decides if your problem is important enough to warrant an audience with the dean. You decide to say something.

APPENDIX D
ATTRIBUTION STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions

Please try to vividly imagine yourself in the situations that follow. If such a situation happened to you, what would you feel would have caused it? While events may have many causes, we want you to pick only one - the major cause if this event happened to you. Please write this cause in the blank provided after each event. Next we want you to answer some questions about the cause and a final questions about this situation. To summarize, we want you to:

- 1) Read each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
- 2) Decide what you feel would be the major cause of the situation if it happened to you.
- 3) Write one cause in the blank provided.
- 4) Answer three questions about the cause.
- 5) Answer one question about the situation.
- 6) Go on to the next situation.

YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO COMPLIMENTS YOU ON YOUR APPEARANCE.

1) Write down the one major cause _____

2) Is the cause of your friend's compliment due to something about you or something about the other person or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due
to the other
person or
circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally
due to me

3) In the future when you are with your friends, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will
always be
present

4) Is the cause something that just affects interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences
just this
particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all
situations
in my life

5) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all
important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely
important

YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A JOB UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR SOME TIME.

6) Write down the one major cause _____

7) Is the cause of your unsuccessful job search due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due
to the other
person or
circumstances

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Totally
due to me

- 8) In the future when looking for a job, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 9) Is the cause something that just influences looking for a job or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 10) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOU BECOME VERY RICH.

- 11) Write down the one major cause _____

- 12) Is the cause of your becoming rich due to something about you or something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 13) In the financial future, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 14) Is the cause something that just affects interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 15) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all												Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					important

A FRIEND COMES TO YOU WITH A PROBLEM AND YOU DON'T TRY TO HELP THEM.

16) Write down the one major cause _____

17) Is the cause of your not helping your friend due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

18) In the future when a friend comes to you with a problem will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

19) Is the cause something that just affects when a friend comes to you with a problem or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

20) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all												Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					important

YOU GIVE AN IMPORTANT TALK IN FRONT OF A GROUP AND THE AUDIENCE REACTS NEGATIVELY.

21) Write down the one major cause _____

22) Is the cause of the audience reacting negatively due to something about you or something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 23) In the future when giving talks, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 24) Is the cause something that just influences giving talks or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 25) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOU DO A PROJECT WHICH IS HIGHLY PRAISED.

- 26) Write down the one major cause _____

- 27) Is the cause of being praised due to something about you or something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 28) In the future when doing a project, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 29) Is the cause something that just affects doing projects or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 30) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO ACTS HOSTILELY TOWARD YOU

- 31) Write down the one major cause _____

- 32) Is the cause of your friend acting hostile due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 33) In the future when interacting with friends, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 34) Is the cause something that just influences interacting with friends or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 35) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOU CAN'T GET ALL THE WORK DONE THAT OTHERS EXPECT OF YOU.

36) Write down the one major cause _____

37) Is the cause of your not getting the work done due to something about you or something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

38) In the future when you doing the work that others expect, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

39) Is the cause something that just affects doing work that others expect or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

40) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOUR SPOUSE (BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND) HAS BEEN TREATING YOU MORE LOVINGLY.

41) Write down the one major cause _____

42) Is the cause of your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treating you more lovingly due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 43) In the future interactions with your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 44) Is the cause something that just affects how your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treats you or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 45) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely important
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

YOU APPLY FOR A POSITION THAT YOU WANT VERY BADLY (e.g., IMPORTANT JOB, GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION, etc.) YOU GET IT.

- 46) Write down the one major cause _____

- 47) Is the cause of your getting the position due to something about you or something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due to the other person or circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally due to me
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

- 48) In the future when applying for a position, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never again be present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Will always be present
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------------

- 49) Is the cause something that just influences applying for a position or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences just this particular situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Influences all situations in my life
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- 50) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all												Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					important

YOU GO OUT ON A DATE AND IT GOES BADLY.

- 51) Write down the one major cause _____

- 52) Is the cause of the date going badly due to something about you or something about the other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due												Totally
to the other												due to me
person or												
circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					

- 53) In the future when dating, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never												Will
again be												always be
present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					present

- 54) Is the cause something that just influences dating or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences												Influences
just this												all
particular												situations
situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					in my life

- 55) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all												Extremely
important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					important

YOU GET A RAISE.

- 56) Write down the one major cause _____

- 57) Is the cause of your getting the raise due to something about other people or circumstance? (Circle one number)

Totally due												Totally
to the other												due to me
person or												
circumstances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					

- 58) In the future on your job, will this cause again be present? (Circle one number)

Will never
again be
present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Will
always be
present

- 59) Is the cause something that just affects getting a raise or does it also influence other areas of your life? (Circle one number)

Influences
just this
particular
situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Influences
all
situations
in my life

- 60) How important would this situation be if it happened to you? (Circle one number)

Not at all
important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely
important

APPENDIX E

COPING STYLES INVENTORY

Please read each item and determine the extent to which you would use it in handling the situation which you have just read. Please place the letter that corresponds with your choice next to each statement

- A: Not at all
- B: A little
- C: Somewhat
- D: Much
- E: Very Much

1. I would concentrate on what I had to do to get to the next step. _____
2. I would try to get a new angle on the situation. _____
3. I would try to find ways to blow off steam. _____
4. I would accept sympathy and understanding from someone. _____
5. I would sleep more than usual. _____
6. I would hope the problem would take care of itself. _____
7. I would tell myself that if I wasn't so careless, things like this wouldn't happen. _____
8. I would try to keep my feelings to myself. _____
9. I would change something so that things would turn out all right. _____
10. I would look for the silver lining, so to speak, try to look on the bright side of things. _____
11. I would find something to get it out of my system. _____
12. I would find somebody who was a good listener. _____

13. I would go along as if nothing were happening. _____
14. I would hope a miracle would happen. _____
15. I would realize that I had brought the problem on myself. _____
16. I would spend more time alone. _____
17. I would stand my ground and fight for what I wanted. _____
18. I would tell myself things that would make me feel better. _____
19. I would let my emotions go. _____
20. I would try to talk to someone about how I was feeling. _____
21. I would try to forget the whole thing. _____
22. I would wish that I had never let myself get involved in that situation. _____
23. I would blame myself. _____
24. I would avoid my family and friends. _____
25. I would make a plan of action and follow it. _____
26. I would look at things in a different light and try to make the best of what was available. _____
27. I would let out my feelings to reduce the stress. _____
28. I would spend more time with people I liked. _____
29. I wouldn't let it get to me; I'd refuse to think about it too much. _____
30. I would wish the situation would go away or somehow be over with. _____
31. I would criticize myself for what happened. _____
32. I would avoid being with people. _____
33. I would tackle the problem head on. _____
34. I would ask myself what was really important, and discover that things weren't so bad after all. _____

35. I would let my feelings out somehow. _____
36. I would talk to someone that I was very close to.

37. I would decide that it was really his/her problem,
not mine. _____
38. I would wish the situation had never started. _____
39. Since what happened was my fault, I would really
chew myself out. _____
40. I wouldn't talk to other people about the problem.

41. I would know what had to be done, so I would double
my efforts and try harder to make things work. _____
42. I would convince myself that things aren't quite as
bad as they seem. _____
43. I would let my emotions out. _____
44. I would let my friends help out. _____
45. I would avoid the person who was causing the
trouble. _____
46. I would fantasize or wish about how things might
turn out. _____
47. I would realize that I was personally responsible
for my difficulties and really lecture myself. _____
48. I would spend some time by myself. _____
49. It was a tricky problem, so I would work around the
edges to make things come out OK. _____
50. I would step back from the situation and put things
into perspective. _____
51. My feelings would be overwhelming and just explode.

52. I would ask a friend or relative I respect for
advice. _____
53. I would make light of the situation and refuse to
get too serious about it. _____

54. I would hope that if I waited long enough, things would turn out OK. _____
55. I would kick myself for letting this happen. _____
56. I would keep my thoughts and feelings to myself.

57. I would work on solving the problems in the situation. _____
58. I would reorganize the way I look at the situation, so things didn't look so bad.
59. I would get in touch with my feelings and just let them go. _____
60. I would spend some time with my friends. _____
61. If every time I thought about it I got upset, I would just stop thinking about it. _____
62. I would wish I could have changed what happened.

63. It would be my mistake and I would need to suffer the consequences. _____
64. I wouldn't let my family and friends know what was going on. _____
65. I would struggle to resolve the problem. _____
66. I would go over the problem again and again in my mind until I could see things in a different light.

67. I would be angry and really blow up. _____
68. I would talk to someone who was in a similar situation. _____
69. I would avoid thinking or doing anything about the situation. _____
70. I would think about fantastic or unreal things that would make me feel better. _____
71. I would tell myself how stupid I was. _____
72. I would not let others know how I was feeling. _____

Scenario 1 (A)

Please read the following situation and imagine that you are actually experiencing it. After reading the paragraph, please respond to the statements that follow in the way you believe you would truly respond to such a conflict.

One evening you go to a party. At this party you meet a man with whom you immediately hit it off. The two of you have a great deal in common and spend the rest of the evening in animated conversation. Before leaving the party, the two of you exchange numbers and make plans to have lunch the following day. For the next several months, you and your new friend become very close. You find yourselves spending a great deal of time together, always enjoying each other's company. However, one day, the two of you have a disagreement that leads to an argument. Your friend appears very upset. When he leaves, he states that he doesn't know if the two of you can be friends anymore.

Scenario 1 (B)

Please read the following situation and imagine that you are actually experiencing it. After reading the paragraph, please respond to the statements that follow in the way you believe you would truly respond to such a conflict.

One evening you go to a party. At this party you meet a woman with whom you immediately hit it off. The two of you have a great deal in common and spend the rest of the evening in animated conversation. Before leaving the party, the two of you exchange numbers and make plans to have lunch the following day. For the next several months, you and your new friend become very close. You find yourselves spending a great deal of time together, always enjoying each other's company. However, one day, the two of you have a disagreement that leads to an argument. Your friend appears very upset. When she leaves, she states that she doesn't know if the two of you can be friends anymore.

Scenario 2 (A)

Please read the following situation and imagine that you are actually experiencing it. After reading the paragraph, please respond to the statements that follow in the way you believe you would truly respond to such a conflict.

You and a friend that you have known for years have made plans to do some cross country traveling. The two of you have been planning this trip for months. You and he have mapped out a course which includes places that each of you has always wanted to see. The route has been finalized and you eagerly look forward to the trip. However, one week before your departure, your friend informs you that he has made some changes in the route you will take. The changes that he has made cause five places that you really wanted to see to be omitted from the trip. When you tell your friend how much you had wanted to see these places, he says that you'll have to try and visit them another time.

Scenario 2 (B)

Please read the following situation and imagine that you are actually experiencing it. After reading the paragraph, please respond to the statements that follow in the way you believe you would truly respond to such a conflict.

You and a friend that you have known for years have made plans to do some cross country traveling. The two of you have been planning this trip for months. You and she have mapped out a course which includes places that each of you has always wanted to see. The route has been finalized and you eagerly look forward to the trip. However, one week before your departure, your friend informs you that she has made some changes in the route you will take. The changes that she has made cause five places that you really wanted to see to be omitted from the trip. When you tell your friend how much you had wanted to see these places, she says that you'll have to try and visit them another time.