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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN COLLEGE: THE ROLE  
OF PARENTAL META-EMOTION PHILOSOPHY  
AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Lyndsey Marie Evans

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
Department of School Psychology

May 2019

This Dissertation by: Lyndsey Marie Evans

Entitled: *Psychological Well-Being in College: The Role of Parental Meta-Emotion  
Philosophy and Romantic Relationships*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
College of Education and Behavioral Science in Department of School Psychology,  
Program of School Psychology

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

---

Achilles N. Bardos, Ph.D., Research Advisor

---

David Hulac, Ph.D., Committee Member

---

Brian Johnson, Ph.D., Committee Member

---

Jennifer Harding, Ph.D., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted by the Graduate School

---

Linda L. Black, Ed.D.  
Associate Provost and Dean  
Graduate School and International Admissions  
Research and Sponsored Programs

## ABSTRACT

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According to recent research, numerous components of psychological well-being have indicated Americans are struggling psychologically. Given that psychological well-being has a bidirectional and, in some cases, a predictive relationship with various environmental factors, this study sought to discover the “missing link” of psychological well-being. In doing so, this study organized parental meta-emotion philosophy, emotion expression, romantic relationship satisfaction, and psychological well-being into unique measurement and structural models. Correlations, *t*-tests and structural equation modeling conducted on a sample of 167 indicated emotion-coaching and psychological well-being were significantly related to romantic relationship satisfaction. Further, emotionally-dismissive parenting was significantly related to emotion expression in relationships. No significant, predictive relationships were found between variables. These results served as a foundation for future research seeking to understand how parental characteristics during childhood and current day relationship satisfaction help to support and influence psychological well-being.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being, Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy, Romantic Relationship Satisfaction, Emotion Expression

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Introduction**

The state of American's psychological well-being is troubling. Psychological well-being is defined as the promotion of mental health by using an individual's strengths, social support systems, and positive self-esteem to mitigate life's difficulties and to fulfill an individual's purpose in life (Copeland, Nelson, & Bardos, 2016). Studies have found that approximately 18.3% of American adults struggle with at least one mental illness (Ahrnsbrak, Bose, Hedden, Lipari, & Park-Lee, 2017). A Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) study indicated that percentages for Substance Use Disorders ranged from 2.7% to 5.6% for illicit drug use disorder and alcohol use disorder, respectively (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). Widespread studies have also collected data regarding specific diagnoses in child and adolescent populations. The 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH; Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017) indicated that 8.9% of children ages 3-17 were diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Just over 8% of same-aged individuals reported taking medication for mental and behavior difficulties illness (e.g., ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, emotional and behavioral concerns, concentration concerns; Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). Further evidentiary support was provided in the form of psychopathologic symptoms such as suicidality. Rates of suicide increased by 24% over a 15-year period with suicide completion counts

per 100,000 people in 1999 and 2015 at 10.5 and 13, respectively (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2016).

Psychological well-being in the college population has been another focus of research. Ahrnsbrak et al. (2017) analyzed data from the 2016 National Survey of Drug Use and Health. Their results indicated rates of psychopathology were increasing among this population. Specifically, the rate of mental illness in individuals ages 18 to 25 was 22.1% in 2016, which had increased from 18.5% in 2008 (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). Rates of specific mental illnesses, such as eating disorders, depression, and anxiety, were also present in the literature. Using an eating disorder screener, 22.8% female and 6.1% male college students screened positive for an eating disorder. Comorbidity rates ranged from 5.4% to 11.4% for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and major depressive disorder, respectively (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017).

Additional prevalence rates were provided by the Mental Health Annual Report (SAMHSA, 2014). From this report, SAMHSA (2014) found 63% of individuals between the ages of 18 to 25 who were seeking help reported having a severe mental illness (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorders). In the same study, increased rates of mental illness were found among individuals in higher education. Namely, 33% of these participants reported having a depression diagnosis (SAMHSA, 2014). This data, albeit from a restricted range of individuals, made evident the number and degree of severe mental illnesses young people were facing.

The culmination of previously mentioned research pointed to the dire need for increased attention toward psychological well-being. A framework of psychological well-being, such as that set forth by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-

Emotional Learning (CASEL; 2003), might promote a clearer conceptualization of psychological well-being.

### **A Framework of Psychological Well-Being**

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2003) integrated social-emotional topics including psychological well-being, into a framework. The model put forth by CASEL was based upon five competencies that addressed three overarching areas: cognition, affect, and behavior (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). The competencies included self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision-making.

The promotion of these competencies across settings (e.g. home, school, community) was deemed ideal in increasing individuals' social-emotional skills. Social-emotional learning (SEL), the promotion of these components within the school setting, was defined as “the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others” (CASEL, 2019, para. 1). Social-emotional learning can take many shapes within the school settings such as promoting safe and respectful schools, teaching perspective taking, problem solving, and emotional language (CASEL, 2019; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017). Within home and community environments, social-emotional support might take the form of facilitated discussions regarding social-emotional topics (e.g. stress, fear, mindfulness) by school staff (e.g., school psychologists, social workers) or community mental health professionals (CASEL, 2017).

## **The Importance of Social-Emotional Learning**

When SEL is effectively implemented within a school system, children experience a myriad of positive outcomes. In a meta-analysis, Taylor et al. (2017) examined studies that included students who ranged in age from kindergarten to high school. Results indicated significant differences between students who were involved in SEL interventions and those who were not. Students who were involved in SEL interventions reported significantly higher social-emotional skills (e.g., coping mechanisms, self-regulation), more positive attitudes, higher self-esteem, and helping others. According to self-reports, participants were also less emotionally distressed and displayed lower rates of substance abuse at the end of the intervention. Perhaps the most interesting finding was the longevity of impact interventions had on students. When follow-up data were collected at varying times (e.g., six months post-intervention, 18 years post-intervention), significant results were seen in the aforementioned areas as well as higher prosocial behavior and academic performance. Lower amounts of conduct behaviors were reported among students who were exposed to SEL interventions (Taylor et al., 2017).

Social-emotional learning teaches children invaluable skills to be utilized and built upon across their lifespan. As Jones and Kahn (2017) stated, “Some skills act as building blocks, serving as a foundation for more complex skills that emerge later in life” (p. 8). As evidenced by the findings from Taylor et al. (2017), equipping children with social-emotional skills sets them on a trajectory for positive outcomes. What are the implications, then, for psychological well-being when SEL is either neglected or



incorrectly implemented, leaving students without these vital skills, and the potential negative implications for education?

### **Why and When Social-Emotional Learning Fails**

If SEL has such a positive impact, why is it not more consistently implemented? The Education Week Research Center (2015) conducted a national survey that examined teachers' and administrators' perceptions of social-emotional learning. While 67% of respondents indicated social-emotional learning was critical to students' academic performance, 30% of respondents reported their schools did not assess social-emotional learning. The primary barrier to SEL implementation was the lack of time within the school day. Other reasons included varied social and emotional needs of the student population and lack of training on SEL intervention implementation (Education Week Research Center, 2015). For teachers and administrators whose schools did measure SEL, 33% indicated their measurements were not used for a specific reason (Education Week Research Center, 2015). These data were concerning because it reflected that even if SEL was measured in schools, the data were not being used in a beneficial way. It is the author's perspective that if this trend continues, it would be extremely difficult to sustain and expand the SEL movement.

The results from the previous study indicated many school districts lacked a unified approach to social-emotional learning, which might be one reason why SEL fails. Payton et al. (2000) reviewed the literature of effective social-emotional learning programs and relevant theories and found four components of effective SEL programs: program design, program coordination, education preparation and support, and program evaluation. Briefly, effective SEL programs state and display explicit goals of the

program, promote generalization of SEL skills, utilize common verbiage across the students' environments, and routinely measure the effectiveness of the program (Payton et al., 2000).

It was evident that in cases where SEL data were not being appropriately used or not used at all, schools were missing the benefits of psychological screening and/or assessments that could ultimately inform them of students' difficulties and how to intervene by choosing and implementing evidence-based curricula and interventions. Data from the Education Week Research Center (2015) survey served as an indication that schools might be missing social-emotional concerns students were having and thereby failing them by neglecting to address such concerns. Simply stated, without SEL in place throughout schools, students might continue onto more negative trajectories.

### **Psychological Well-Being and College Students**

Students with mental illnesses often arrive to college with mental health issues that might or might not have been addressed previously. Various percentages of the onset of mental disorders have been put forth in the literature. The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI; 2016) stated that the onset of 75% of mental disorders was before age 24 while Auerbach and colleagues (2016) found the onset of 83.1% of mental disorders occurred before individuals entered college. Although variations existed between these two findings, the high nature of both rates reflected the need for preventive work beginning in early childhood and throughout adolescence. The high incidence of mental illness in college students was concerning given the academic outcomes linked to mental illness. For example, American College Health Association (2016), utilizing National College Health Assessment data, found 15.4% of participants reported

depression had impacted their ability to learn. Further, 24.9% and 32.2% of participants reported anxiety and stress, respectively, as deterrents to their college academic performance (American College Health Association, 2016). These rates are problematic because “students who are depressed can be expected to learn less, not to learn as well, and to learn more slowly than their peers” (Douce & Keeling, 2014, p. 2).

When mental illness makes learning more challenging, students with mental illnesses are more likely to drop out of college than those without (Auerbach et al., 2016; Boyraz, Horne, Owens, & Armstrong, 2016; Porche, Fortuna, Lin, & Alegria, 2011). Examples of mental illnesses examined in these studies included depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance use disorders. Gruttadaro and Crudo (2012) found similar findings with over half of participants who dropped out of college reporting mental illness concerns as their reason for leaving college. This is unfortunate given that lower educational attainment presents its own host of problems (e.g., increased unemployment rates, limited financial resources; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, 2016).

In addition to students arriving to college with unmet psychological needs, college students’ psychological well-being is also influenced by the transition to new social systems as a result of seeking an out-of-state education. More students are leaving their well-rooted social support systems to create a new social system (Anderson & Douglas-Gabriel, 2016). This, in the midst of a major transitory period of their lives, often creates stress, which might partially explain the decreased psychological well-being students experience when first arriving to college (Ridner, Newton, Staten, Crawford, & Hall, 2016).

Taken together, the data suggested psychological well-being, while important for success in college, is often threatened in college. In addition to addressing social-emotional learning, focusing on supports of psychological well-being could help mitigate difficulties in college.

### **Psychological Well-Being and Romantic Relationships**

Social support is one factor that has been linked to positive psychological outcomes. Romantic relationships, a subset of social support, have repeatedly been shown to support psychological well-being (Johnson, Kent, & Yale, 2012; Weisskirch, 2017; Whitton, Weitbrecht, Kuryluk, & Bruner, 2013). For example, Weisskirch (2017) examined individual characteristics within romantic relationships and specific areas of psychological well-being that were impacted. Findings suggested higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with higher happiness levels and lower psychological distress (e.g., hope, confidence; Weisskirch, 2017). The link between romantic relationships and psychological well-being is complex with research indicating the influence was bidirectional. Moreover, specific individual and relationship characteristics (e.g., self-efficacy, attachment styles), instead of mere relationship status, appeared to be the mechanisms responsible for the benefits to psychological well-being (Rowell & Coplan, 2013; Weisskirch, 2017).

In addition to happiness and psychological distress, other areas of psychological well-being including self-esteem, lower levels of loneliness, and decreased depressive symptomatology were shown to be positively influenced by romantic relationships (Johnson et al., 2012; Whitton et al., 2013).

Gender differences in the psychological benefits of romantic relationships have been demonstrated with females displaying a higher benefit from relationships (Simon & Barrett, 2010; Whitton et al., 2013). Because romantic relationships are linked to positive psychological well-being outcomes, it is important to identify and support factors that promote satisfaction. Although many factors have been provided in research (e.g., participation in mutually-enjoyable activities, effective conflict resolution), a specific emphasis was placed on the role of effective emotional expression within romantic relationships.

### **Emotional Expression in Romantic Relationships**

Emotional expression is defined as the action of becoming vulnerable by opening up about one's "inner experiences" (Harrison, 2013-2014, p. 4). Significant associations between emotional expression and positive social outcomes including meaningful social experiences, relationship intimacy, and higher levels of relationship satisfaction were demonstrated in the literature (Graham, Huang, Clark, & Helgeson, 2008; Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day, & Gangamma, 2014). By appropriately disclosing information about one's self to selected members in one's social support system including a romantic partner, individuals open up the opportunity to build stronger relationships (Yoo et al., 2014). It is important to note that other studies found inconsistent results (Chervovsky & Hunt, 2017; McKinnon & Greenberg, 2017). These discrepancies are elaborated upon in Chapter II.

The positive influence of emotional expression in romantic relationships also extends to relationships when at least one partner has a mental illness. Studying a sample of veterans displaying symptoms of PTSD and their romantic partners, Kar and O'Leary

(2013) examined the rates of intimate partner violence and amount of emotional intimacy veterans displayed within their relationships. They found that when participants engaged in lower intrarelationship emotion expression, rates of intimate partner violence were higher. These results pointed to the importance of frequent and healthy emotional expression as the lack of it could be dangerous for one or both partners.

Although past research investigated the role emotion expression played with regard to relationship quality, how emotion expression might be influential in the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and romantic relationship satisfaction has yet to be examined. In the present study, emotion expression was studied as a mediator between parental meta-emotion philosophy and relationship satisfaction.

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy**

Parental meta-emotion philosophy refers to parental perceptions of one's experience with differing emotions as well as their response to their children's emotional expression (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996). The vital role of parenting has been widely recognized for decades (Farrant, Devine, Maybery, & Fletcher, 2012; Johnson, Berdahl, Horne, Richter, & Walters, 2014; Landry, Smith, & Swank, 2003). As recently stated by Weir (2017), "Of all the factors that boost resiliency, good parenting is often the most significant" (p. 40).

Throughout the years, researchers have attempted to capture good parenting. Examples of these efforts are Baumrind's (1966, 1971) typology of parenting styles with the authoritative style considered the most optimal for children. Gottman et al. (1996, 1997) also proposed beneficial aspects of parenting such as parents' perceptions of their

children's emotions, which were included as part of their parental meta-emotion philosophy.

Gottman et al. (1996) presented four categories of parental meta-emotion philosophy: emotion-coaching, emotionally-dismissive, emotionally-disapproving, and "high acceptance, low coaching" (p. 264). The emotion-coaching style is considered a positive view of emotions, whereas the remaining three categories are considered negative. Because this study was interested in positive versus negative perceptions of emotions and not necessarily which type of negative perception (e.g., emotionally-dismissive, emotionally-disapproving) influenced lifelong outcomes, the negative categories of parental meta-emotion philosophy were grouped together. Thus, the parental meta-emotion philosophy categories were emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive. This grouping style was consistent with that utilized by Lagacé-Séguin and Gionet (2009), wherein the emotionally-dismissive and emotionally-disapproval categories were grouped together. Although Gottman and colleagues (1996) utilized the word *parental*, the term *caregiver* was used throughout this paper to recognize that children could be raised by individuals who are not their birth parents.

In initial studies on parental meta-emotion philosophy, Gottman et al. (1997) collected several forms of data at two data collection times. The first data collection occurred with pre-schooled age children, ages four to six, and included measurements in the forms of parent interviews and observations, parent-child interaction observations, and peer-to-peer interaction observations. Additionally, researchers observed and coded child participants' reactions to a film and collected heart rate and vagal tone data. Three years later, data on the parent participants' marriage outcomes (e.g., married, divorced,

separated) and the children's emotions and quality of friendships were collected. Lower teacher ratings of children's friendships were predicted by derogation, a parental meta-emotion philosophy dimension typically seen in emotionally-dismissive parenting at the second data collection point. Conversely, maternal coaching of their child's sadness at the first data collection point was predictive of higher teacher ratings of the child's friendships (Gottman et al., 1997). These findings were important given the importance of friendships and social support previously documented.

Parental meta-emotion philosophy was found to be connected with academic achievement. Gottman et al. (1997) utilized mothers' self-awareness of sadness and fathers' level of coaching when their children were angry as the predictor variables. Children's academic achievements in reading and math were used as the outcome variables for both models. Gottman et al. found two children with the same intelligence quotient would achieve differently depending on their parents' meta-emotion structure. This finding represented the clear importance of supporting parents' views and responses to emotional states in their children as well as the connection between bolstering classroom achievement through parenting variables.

Although the original models by Gottman et al. (1997) studied parental meta-emotion philosophy and vagal tone, these physiological characteristics (e.g., heart rate, skin conductance) were beyond the scope of the current study. Because the current study was concerned with the possible psychological implications of parental meta-emotion philosophy, the data collection surrounded long-term psychological outcomes (e.g., psychological well-being).



To the researcher's knowledge, no research has examined the influence parental meta-emotion philosophy has in young adulthood. By using a young adult sample, this study sought to provide preliminary information regarding the potential influences of parental meta-emotion philosophy regarding varying aspects of an individual's life and how psychological well-being was impacted. Knowing about factors that influence psychological well-being could enhance the ability to design and implement evidence-based interventions.

### **Need for This Study**

Decades of literature have stressed the importance of a person's psychological well-being and examined contributing factors that influenced its development. While many factors have been identified, research still lacks vital supporters of psychological well-being. The increasing rates of suicide completion and statistics of heightened loneliness are evidence that Americans are still struggling with psychological well-being. This study presents a new assemblage of variables that began in the early stages of one's life, continue through young adulthood and beyond, and might provide further insight into how psychological well-being could be supported. Further, it is the first study to propose that parental meta-emotion philosophy is indirectly influential in psychological well-being. The more information that is known about factors that influence psychological well-being, the more researchers and practitioners will be able to design interventions that support psychological well-being.

### **Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of this study was threefold. First, this study examined the longevity of the impact parental meta-emotion philosophy had on individuals, specifically relating

to emotion expression and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships. This would help the current literature in becoming more comprehensive as it would add to what is known about parental meta-emotion philosophy in adulthood. Secondly, this study heeded the suggestions put forth by Gottman et al. (1996) that called for “experiments...to test the path analytic model we have developed from correlational data” (p. 4; see Figure 1 for path analysis diagram). Lastly, this study sought to provide additional evidence regarding the psychometric properties of a tool that claimed to measure a number of constructs identified in the literature as components of one’s psychological well-being--the Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS; Copeland et al., 2016). Although the acquisition of knowledge surrounding psychological well-being is vital, the ability to accurately measure this information is of extreme importance. By accomplishing these three purposes, this study added information beyond what the existing literature found regarding parental meta-emotion philosophy and would enable practitioners to better assess and perhaps assist in young adults’ psychological well-being. This information might help to provide crucial insight into what could be considered the missing link of early life experiences and their impact on a person’s psychological well-being. This added knowledge and possible implications for further research might contribute to a better understanding and benefit of individuals’ psychological well-being.

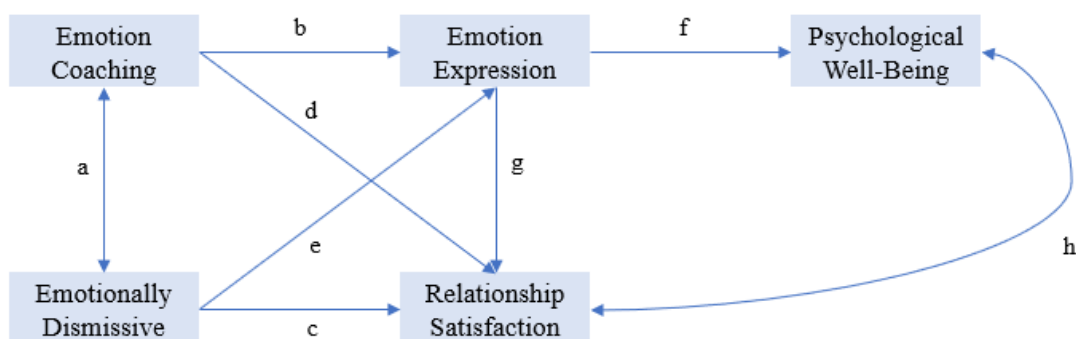


Figure 1. The original proposed model.

### Research Questions

Prior to examining the study's main research questions, the study examined the psychometric properties of the tools used to operationalize the constructs of this study. Their construct validity was examined as appropriate including an investigation of the construct validity of the scales through exploratory factor analysis followed by estimates of reliability of each scale. Psychological well-being was measured using the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016). In a similar fashion, as numerous pieces were altered from the original work, the psychometric properties were examined for the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) and Parental Perceptions and the Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire (PPREEQ). After these properties were examined, the study's main research questions are explored as presented.

- Q1 What is the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy (as measured by the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire [PPREEQ]), emotion expression in relationships (as measured by the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised [SEFQ-Revised]) satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships (as measured by the Couples Satisfaction Index [CSI]) and psychological well-being (as measured by the Journey to Wellness Scale [JWS])?

- Q1.1 Does the parental meta-emotion philosophy of participants' caregivers predict satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
- Q1.2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
- Q2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and psychological well-being?
- Q3 What is the stability of participants' reported psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction about two to three months later for those in different reported relationship statuses?
- Q4 Are there any differences in the psychological well-being profiles (as measured by the JWS) of students who stay in college (at data collection point two) and those who are no longer enrolled in college?

### **Summary**

The current study was unique as it investigated the indirect effects of parental meta-emotion philosophy on young adult romantic relationship satisfaction and psychological well-being. It was also the first study to examine the potential mediating effect of emotional expression between parental meta-emotion philosophy and relationship satisfaction. Studying the specific combination of these variables might provide information about links between childhood characteristics and adult outcomes. This information might help inform the importance of parents' awareness and perceptions of their children's emotions, especially with regard to adult outcomes (e.g., psychological well-being).

### **Delimitations**

Although every effort was made to ensure this study added to the current pool of research, three limitations are worthy of acknowledgement. First, the participants were asked about their parents' meta-emotion philosophy. The nature of parental meta-

emotion philosophy involves internal processes and characteristics (e.g., attitudes, beliefs). As a result, it might have been difficult for participants to infer these mental states if they had never been especially cognizant of their parents' feelings toward emotions. As was discussed, however, how parents emotionally socialize their children might be reflective of their own beliefs about emotions (e.g., parental meta-emotion philosophy). Secondly, it involved the perceptions of internal processes instead of their parents' *true* internal processes and characteristics. However, the case could be made that individuals' perceptions, not the actual events, are important for how individuals experience these events. Thirdly, this was a retrospective study. Participants were asked to retrieve memories somewhat removed at this point in their lives. It was possible that over time and with higher rates of memory retrieval, the memories might have changed from the actual instances. Again, the focus of any event was how an individual perceived and experienced it.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Emotion expression.** The action of becoming vulnerable by opening up about one's "inner experiences" (Harrison, 2013-2014, p. 4).

**Emotion socialization.** Parental responses and conversations with their children surrounding the expression of emotion (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998).

**Parental meta-emotion philosophy.** Parental perception of one's experience with differing emotions as well as their response to their children's emotion expression (Gottman et al., 1996).

**Psychological well-being.** The promotion of mental health by using an individual's and to fulfill an individual's purpose in life (Copeland, Nelson, & Traugher, 2010).

**Relationship satisfaction.** Happiness and love felt with and toward a romantic partner based on desired characteristics and goals of the relationship being fulfilled (Bunt & Hazelwood, 2017).

**Social support.** Over-arching term referring to several types of support (e.g., emotional, informational) obtained through interpersonal relationships (Wagner, Monson, & Hart, 2016).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter begins with a presentation of psychological well-being and social emotional learning (SEL), which also includes a discussion of the overall current state of psychological well-being (PWB) in the United States. The focus then changes to an examination of PWB as it specifically relates to college students. One factor presented as a protective factor for PWB and particularly relevant for college students is social support in the form of romantic relationships. Behavioral characteristics of romantic relationships, such as effective communication, and emotional characteristics, such as emotion suppression and expression, are addressed. Because these characteristics can be influential in the outcomes of and satisfaction derived from relationships, research on how individuals learn about and express their emotions is presented. Of particular interest is parental meta-emotion philosophy. By reviewing the current literature on these constructs, it became evident that gaps existed regarding how parental meta-emotion philosophy was related to emotion expression, relationship satisfaction, and overall psychological well-being.

#### **Delineating and Defining Well-Being**

A differentiation exists between various forms of well-being, although some argue only one overarching well-being construct is present (Disabato, Goodman,

Kashdan, Short, & Jarden, 2016). Researchers who subscribe to a differentiated conceptualization of well-being have broken well-being into categories including subjective, hedonic, eudemonic, and psychological well-being (Pchelin & Howell, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Andrews and Whithey (as cited in Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), subjective well-being refers to “positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction” (p. 71). Items that measure subjective well-being assess one’s overall satisfaction with their life’s circumstances as well as how closely their actual life aligns with their ideal one (Diener et. al, 1985). Subjective well-being has been likened to hedonic well-being in two ways. Some researchers conceptualize hedonic well-being as a smaller component within subjective well-being while others view them separately with shared components. Two shared components of these types of well-being are life satisfaction and positive affect (Yoon et al., 2015). Eudaimonic well-being is often considered when how meaningful an individual appraises his or her own life (Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008).

The type of well-being utilized and assessed in the current study was psychological well-being (PWB). Although no one definition of PWB has been agreed upon, references to PWB have often included self-esteem, happiness and other positive affective states, and effective use of coping mechanisms (Lemay & Neal, 2014; Weisskirch, 2017). Other researchers included seeking meaning in life (Dezutter et al., 2013; Waters & Fivush, 2015) as a component of PWB. Instruments that measured well-being also examined other components such as energy, connectedness, and self-regulation (Copeland & Nelson, 2004; Paul, Poole, & Jakubowyc, 1998). The definition of PWB for the current study was the promotion of mental health using an individual’s



strengths, social support systems, and positive self-esteem to mitigate life's difficulties and to fulfill an individual's purpose in life (Copeland et al., 2016).

### **A Framework of Psychological Well-Being**

In a series of articles, CASEL (2003, 2017) put forth a framework based on five components that addressed three over-arching areas: cognition, affect, and behavior (Taylor et al., 2017). According to Dusenbury and Weissberg (2017), the components in the model included:

- Self-awareness includes the acknowledgement of an individual's state of being. That is, the recognition of triggers and their subsequent emotions are crucial to self-awareness.
- Social awareness includes the ability to recognize the emotional states of other individuals as well as the recognition of resources an individual can reach out to for help.
- Relationship skills require using healthy communication to preserve friendships and relationships with others. It also refers to an individual's ability to withstand peer pressure.
- Self-management, or also referred to as emotional regulation, requires the ability to internally buffer emotions, as to not act emotionally inappropriate.
- Responsible decision-making refers to an individual's ability to consider the moral and ethical implications of decisions and consequently make the most optimal decision. (p. 4)

The promotion of these components across settings (e.g., home, school, community) is ideal in order to increase individuals' social-emotional skills. Social-

emotional learning (SEL), the promotion of these components within the school setting, is defined as “the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others’ (CASEL, 2017, para. 1). Social-emotional learning can take many shapes within the school setting including the promotion of safe and respectful schools, teaching skills such as perspective taking, problem solving, labelling emotions, and the use of explicit instructions in the classroom (CASEL, 2017; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017). Attention to SEL within the home and community might take the form of facilitated discussions led by school staff or community mental health professionals. Such discussions cover topics like coping, optimism, and resiliency (CASEL, 2017). In addition to the social-emotional components the CASEL framework included, CASEL researchers also reviewed literature and child outcomes to determine the most pivotal components that comprised successful and effective SEL programs. Through this review, Payton et al. (2000) outlined four characteristics of successful SEL programs: program design, program coordination, educator preparation and support, and program evaluation. Briefly, effective programs were designed in such a way that program goals were explicit and clear. Programs linked with the most positive student outcomes were also coordinated so these goals were communicated to all stakeholders across the home, school, and community (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents, private therapists). The educator preparation and support category pertained to the training school professionals were provided through the program (Payton et al., 2000). In effective SEL programs, this support takes the form of initial training and on-going provisions. Finally, effective

programs continuously monitor the program's effectiveness and are informed by data-based decision-making (Payton et al., 2000).

The inclusion of these characteristics into SEL programs in school districts might aid preventative and mitigative work regarding social-emotional issues, which are vitally important for the future of this nation's students. The following section examines the prevalence of mental illnesses in the United States while simultaneously providing support for attention to social-emotion concerns including mental illness in school districts.

### **Current Statistics on Psychological Well-Being**

Overall, the state of Americans' PWB is troubling. As previously mentioned, 18.3% of American adults reported having at least one mental illness (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). The same study provided rates of major depressive episodes. While 6.7% of this sample reported experiencing a major depressive episode in 2016, 4.3% reported experiencing severe impairment (e.g., relationships, work-related) with a major depressive episode (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). Perhaps even more concerning was over half of adults in the United States with mental illnesses were not receiving mental illness services (Walker, Cummings, Hockenberry, & Druss, 2015). When connected with findings that suggested untreated mental illness was associated with poorer outcomes, the case for attention to SEL and research on psychological well-being was further supported (Altamura et al., 2015).

Less common mental illnesses such as personality disorders were also topics of research. A study by Lenzenweger, Lane, Loranger, and Kessler (2007) examined personality disorders in a sample from the United States. All participants were screened

using the International Personality Disorder Examination. A smaller portion of this sample ( $n = 214$ ) was interviewed using clinical reappraisal interviews. Using multiple imputation to produce prevalence estimates of any personality disorder, Lenzenweger et al. estimated that 22.9% of their adult sample met the criteria for a personality disorder. This was consistent with other studies (Quirk, Williams, Chanen, and Berk (2015) who found a 21.5% prevalence of personality disorders in adults. In addition to mental illness statistics, behavioral and social indicators of psychological well-being also reflected distress. Two such indicators, suicide and loneliness, are reviewed. After statistics on each are presented, these indicators are connected to specific CASEL domains they are lacking.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Piscopo, Lipari, Cooney, & Glasheen, 2016) and the World Health Organization (WHO; 2016) provided data regarding increasing rates of suicidality. According to the Centers for Disease Control (2016), 44,193 people in the United States completed suicide. For individuals ages 10 to 34, suicide was the second most common cause of death (CDC, 2016). The number of individuals who completed suicide in 1999 was 10.5 and this number jumped to 13 out of 100,000 individuals by 2014. Further, suicide completion rates increased by 24% from 1999 to 2014. In addition to those who died by suicide are the 1.4 million Americans who attempted suicide but were unsuccessful (Piscopo et al., 2016). The age group that comprised the highest percentage of this number was the 18- to 25-year-old group. Five hundred and seventy-one thousand individuals or 1.6% of the overall attempted suicide rate were ages 18 to 25 (Piscopo et al., 2016). An additional increase was observed in 2015 when 19.5 individuals per 100,000 died by suicide (WHO,

2016). Suicide rates are reflective of psychological well-being as they are often connected with psychopathology (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the lack of effective coping mechanisms (Knafo et al., 2015), and loneliness (van Dulmen & Goossens, 2013).

In addition to the well-documented connection between suicidality and mental illness, suicidal ideation and rates of suicide attempts and completion might indicate an individual lacking in the CASEL's self-management domain (Brenner et al., 2011; Eroglu, Karakus, & Tamam, 2013; Gunderson, 2015). As previously noted, the self-management domain includes an individual's inhibition and impulse control in the face of challenging emotions. Prior research suggested impulsivity plays a major role in adolescent suicidal behavior. Taken together, it stood to reason individuals who engaged in suicidal behavior might struggle with self-management (Auerbach, Stewart, & Johnson, 2017; Ghanem et al., 2013). Similarly, suicidality has been connected to social isolation, which might indicate potential struggles in the social awareness and relationship skills domains (King & Merchant, 2008; Oliffe et al., 2017; Winterrowd, Canetto, & Chavez, 2010).

Additional evidence for difficulties within these domains is the "loneliness epidemic," which refers to increasing isolation thought to be rampaging through the United States (Murphy, 2017). Evidence for this was provided by several studies, each indicating higher levels of loneliness were becoming ever more common. In 2006, McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Brashears replicated the Global Social Survey and measured Americans' perceptions of their loneliness. Survey questions inquired about individuals in the participants' lives who acted as confidantes. Information was also

gathered on participants' close relationships and the connectedness between these relationships. When compared to the original Global Social Survey, which was collected in 1985, the rates of loneliness in 2004 were three times those in 1985 (McPherson et al., 2006). Similarly, the American Psychological Association (APA; 2017a) conducted a study surrounding familial relationships and the impact of technology on these relationships. Their findings, which indicated 45% of parents felt their bonds with their children had decreased, also suggested loneliness was present even within immediate families. This percentage was concerning when the connection between loneliness and social skills development was coupled with the home environment being the source of developing social skills (e.g., Burke, Wozidlo, & Segrin, 2012; Jones, Hobbs, & Hockenbury, 1982; Riley, Scaramella, & McGoron, 2014). As cited in APA (2017b), Holt-Lunstead stated, "These trends suggest that Americans becoming less socially connected and experiencing more loneliness" (para. 2)

### **Mental Illness in College Students**

The college years are a unique phase in an individual's life as students transition out of their potentially deeply-rooted support systems and integrate into a new social atmosphere (Schneider, Klager, Chen, & Burns, 2016; Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2007). Unique challenges such as deciding on a major, picking class schedules, and integrating into new friend groups could add to the already stressful transition. Such stressors were examined in a correlational study by Beiter et al. (2014). Their study examined the college-aged prevalence of mental illness. Results suggested students experiencing a higher amount of stress over college and career-related domains also reported a higher amount of internalizing concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety; Beiter et al., 2014). The 2016 National

Survey of Drug Use and Health (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017) longitudinally investigated data that suggested statistically significant increases in mental illness rates in individuals ages 18 to 25. In 2008, 18.5% of individuals within this age range were reported to have a mental illness. By 2016, this number had jumped to 22.1% of individuals. Statistically significant increases were also reported in the rates of severe mental illness with rates increasing from 3.8% to 5.9% (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017). The 2016 National Survey of Drug Use and Health also provided information surrounding specific disorders including major depressive disorder. Results indicated a significantly higher number of individuals suffered major depressive episodes in 2016. This number increased from 8.8% in 2005 to 10.9% in 2016 (Ahrnsbrak et al., 2017).

Other mental illnesses of particular concern in the college population are eating disorders (Grilo, Reas, Hopwood, & Crosby, 2015; Kass et al., 2017; Phillips, Kemppainen, Mechling, MacKain, & Kim-Godwin, 2015). Eisenberg, Nicklett, Roeder, and Kirz (2011) examined rates of eating disorders in 2,822 undergraduate and graduate students. Data were collected using the SCOFF Questionnaire (Morgan, Reid, & Lacey, 2000); the acronym was developed from each of the measure's questions:

Do you make yourself Sick because you feel uncomfortably full?

Do you worry that you have lost Control over how much you eat?

Have you recently lost more than One stone (14 lb) in a 3-month period?

Do you believe yourself to be Fat when others say you are too thin?

Would you say that Food dominates your life? (p. 1)

Eisenberg et al. (2011) found 13.5% of female undergraduate participants and 9.3% of female graduate participants screened positive for eating disorders. This number

contrasted with the 3.6% of male undergraduate participants who screened positive and 3.1% of male graduate participants. All participants, regardless of having previously receiving an eating disorder diagnosis, were screened using the SCOFF (Morgan et al., 2000). Comorbidity rates between eating disorders and emotional disorders were examined using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Patient Health Questionnaire Primary Care Study Group, 1999). Results indicated 11.4% of participants who screened positive for an eating disorder also displayed symptoms consistent with major depressive disorder. Additionally, 5.4% of participants who screened positive for an eating disorder had symptoms consistent with generalized anxiety disorder while 2.4% of participants aligned with panic disorder symptoms (Eisenberg et al., 2011).

### **Correlates of Psychological Well-Being**

A breadth of studies has utilized correlational design to examine the relationships between various factors and psychological well-being (PWB). Although not establishing a causal relationship, this literature provided information regarding factors that co-exist with differing levels of PWB. Research has determined that such coinciding factors include social-emotional learning (SEL), individual traits, and physiological and social supports. These studies are now briefly summarized.

### **Social Support**

Social support is integral within and across many domains in the literature. Its implications can be seen in areas such as criminology, sociology, and medicine (Bae, 2015; Cullen, 1994; Yang et al., 2016). A brief overview of theories of social support precedes a review of social support literature. Social support was defined by Lumino,



Ragozini, van Dujin, and Vitale (2017) as “a commodity arising from interactions among people that can be activated when necessary, mainly in adverse conditions” (p. 781). A social support theory has been collectively put forth by various researchers, which has provided a structure with which to conceptualize the broad concept of social support.

### **Social Support Theory**

Given social support’s widespread prevalence in the literature, it was not surprising that several theories of social support were put forth. Shumaker and Brownell (1984) suggested the crux of social support theory is the “exchange of resources” between at least two individuals (p. 11). Important components of this theory are prosocial behavior and reciprocity. Prosocial behavior, commonly referred to as “helping behavior” refers to actions that benefit others (Li, Su, Liu, Shi, & Shi, 2017, p. 1806). Examples of prosocial behavior the literature provided were providing advice, sharing desirable items, services, and rewards (e.g. game tokens), and comforting others (Li et al., 2017; van Hoorn, van Dijk, Meuwese, Rieffe, & Crone, 2016). Within the context of social support theory, prosocial behavior is an avenue through which participants’ well-being is supported (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). In addition to prosocial behavior, reciprocity is important for positive outcomes individuals receive from social support. Between individuals within a social support system, the ability for each individual to equally provide support for the others is vital. According to Shumaker and Brownell (1984), this holds especially true for individuals who are not closely integrated with each other.

Not surprising given the functions of social support, it is associated with higher levels of well-being (Goulimaris, Mavridis, Genti, & Rokka, 2014). This connection has

been demonstrated across the lifespan and across domains of the human experience including grief and loss, illness, and major life changes (Alcantara et al., 2016; Bottomley, Burke, & Neimeyer, 2017; Efficace et al., 2016; Hartig & Viola, 2016; Lee, Boltz, Lee, & Algase, 2017; Thoits, 2010). One major life change, the adjustment to college, has been studied and found to provoke changes in PWB. For example, Fiori and Consedine (2013) measured loneliness, positive and negative social interactions, and emotional well-being in first year college students. Positive social interactions, or “positive social exchanges,” included interactions that provided emotional support, friendship, or advice (Fiori & Consedine, 2013, p. 921). Over an eight-month period, individuals who reported having positive social exchanges had increased emotional well-being. Loneliness acted as a mediator. Therefore, by reducing individuals’ levels of loneliness, their emotional well-being was increased. The opposite also held true--negative social interactions were linked with decreased emotional well-being. This provided evidence that positive social support was important for PWB (Fiori & Consedine, 2013).

In addition to the positive association between personal social support systems (e.g., family, friends) and positive emotions (e.g., happiness), these systems were also significantly and negatively associated with negative emotions (e.g., sadness, hostility; Weinberg, 2017). In a study conducted in Israel, social support was measured in adult participants who were exposed to traumatic events (Weinberg, 2017). Social support was divided into informal and formal with the former being support from personal social networks (e.g., family, friends) and the latter being provided in a therapy-type setting. The presence of positive emotions and absence of negative emotions served as the

indicators of PWB. Informal social support was found to be significantly related to participants' PWB while no significant correlations were found between PWB and formal support systems. These findings provided evidentiary support for the protective role social support plays on PWB (Weinberg, 2017).

Social support is assessed in various ways. For example, Fiori and Consedine (2013) assessed social support by counting the number of interactions participants experienced in the month prior to the study. Other methods measured the amount of perceived social support an individual provided others as well as self-report instruments that measured how supported an individual felt from others. Following both methods, Porter and Chambless (2014) measured social support utilizing the Support in Intimate Relationship Rating Scale-Revised and the Support in Intimate Relationship Rating Scale-Revised-Support Provided (Barry, Bunde, Brock, & Lawrence, 2009; Porter & Chambless, 2014). Still another method of assessing social support included breaking up social support into various components such as emotional and instrumental support (Cyranowski et al., 2013). Cyranowski et al. (2013) utilized this approach when creating the National Institute of Health Toolbox Adult Social Relationship Scales. This assessment method was consistent with that of Sherbourne and Steward (1991) who also included informational support, positive social interaction, and affectionate support in addition to instrumental support as dimensions of social support.

### **Social-Emotional Learning**

As previously mentioned, social-emotional learning (SEL) is the promotion of PWB when children experience a myriad of positive outcomes. A meta-analytic review revealed significant differences between students who were involved in SEL

interventions and those who were not, specifically in the areas of coping mechanisms, self-regulation, and positive attitudes. These differences were also maintained and displayed longitudinally when examined 18 years post-treatment (Taylor et al., 2017).

### **Individual Traits as Support**

Individual traits including empathy, feelings of personal accomplishment, and conscientiousness have been linked with varying levels of PWB. In several studies, empathy was positively associated with PWB (Khajeh, Baharloo, & Soliemani, 2014; Thomas et al., 2007). Empathy refers to one's ability to "put yourselves in the shoes of the other, to understand his feelings, his intentions and his desires" (Belzung, 2014, p. 181). In a study conducted by Thomas et al. (2007), medical students' levels of empathy and well-being were examined. Thomas et al. broke empathy into three types: cognitive, emotive, and behavioral. Using the Quality of Life Scale developed by Burckhardt and Anderson (2003), the authors assessed 10 domains of PWB including spirituality and social activities. Results reflected gender differences in the strength of relationships between empathy and well-being; male participants' PWB levels were more strongly associated with cognitive and emotive empathy. Only a mild correlation of .32 was found between one domain of PWB (social activities) and female participants' empathy levels (Thomas et al., 2007).

Similar correlations were found between PWB and empathy in an Iranian sample. Using data from participants from an Iranian background, Khajeh et al. (2014) studied the correlation between participants' empathy quotient on the Empathy Quotient Scale developed by Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) and PWB. The Empathy Quotient Scale assesses the number of varying components of empathy (e.g., perspective-taking,

feeling another's feelings) an individual possesses (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Results revealed individuals who self-reported themselves as being high in empathy also reported higher PWB (Khajeh et al., 2014). A study with a different sample (e.g. emergency room nurses) found similar results, such that nurses with low levels of empathy also reported less healthy PWB (Bourgault et al., 2015).

Other individual areas of PWB including mental illness and feelings of "personal accomplishment" were also examined by Thomas et al. (2007, p. 177). A negative correlation was reported between depression and empathy. Specifically, as depression levels increased, empathy levels decreased. Conversely, personal accomplishment was positively related with empathy. Similarly, overall empathy was positively associated with PWB (Thomas et. al, 2007). Although correlational in nature, these findings provided information regarding what characteristics individuals with high levels of PWB also possessed.

The association between personality traits and PWB appeared to cross ethnic boundaries as studies have included participants from Finland, Pakistan, and the United States. For example, Kokko, Tolvanen, and Pulkkinen (2013) found a significant, positive association between conscientiousness and PWB in a sample of Finnish adults. Comparable results were found by Arshad and Rafique (2016) who used a sample of Pakistani participants. Participants who reported higher rates of PWB also reported higher rates of conscientiousness. It was important to note that while this relationship was made, extremely high conscientiousness could negatively influence PWB. Carter, Guan, Maples, Williamson, and Miller (2016) suggested individuals with such levels of conscientiousness might display symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder. When

individuals reached such a level, conscientiousness was no longer functional to their PWB (Carter et al., 2016).

### **Physiological Supports**

Healthier levels of psychological well-being have been correlated aspects of an individual's lifestyle including diet and exercise. Conner, Brookie, Carr, Mainvil, and Vissers (2017) found college students who were provided and ate fruits and vegetables reported feeling more motivated, engaged in life, and focused on growing as a person, which was not reported by individuals who were not provided fruits and vegetables. This was consistent with the findings of Skarupski, Tangney, Li, Evans, and Morris (2013) who found from a sample of elderly adults that healthy food consumption acted as a protective factor against symptoms consistent with depression. Their sample was elderly adults; however, it stands to reason children and adolescents might benefit similarly from healthy diets.

Comparable results were found by Lindheimer, O'Connor, and Dishman (2015) who completed a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials that examined the influences of exercise on psychological well-being. This study incorporated prior research that examined cognition, energy, fatigue, and pain in addition to anxiety and depression (Lindheimer et al., 2015). Effect sizes of nine studies were examined and a meta-regression equation was calculated. Results indicated a placebo effect was responsible for approximately half of the influence of exercise on PWB (Lindheimer et al., 2015).

## **Measuring Well-Being**

Cooke, Melchert, and Connor (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of measures of well-being. Examples of such measures included the widely-used Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-Being Scales, which assessed an individual's status on six components of PWB: "self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and "self-growth" (p. 1071; Ghoshal & Mehrotra, 2017; Jung, Pawlowski, & Kim, 2017; Linley, Maltby, Wood, Osborne, & Hurling, 2009; Okun, Dittburner, & Huff, 2006). Another measure presented was the Questionnaire for Eudemonic Well-Being developed by Waterman et al. (2010). This questionnaire included 21 items that assessed an individual's knowledge and alignment with his/her life's purpose as well as awareness and use of personal strengths (Waterman et al., 2010).

Many instruments measuring psychological well-being conceptualize PWB as a construct on a continuum: Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-Being Scales; Richardson, Iezzi, Khan, and Maxwell's (2014) Assessment of Quality of Life (AQoL-8D); and f Cornell, Villanueva, and Retzlaff's (1992) Quality of Life Inventory. The conceptualization of psychological well-being in the current study, which was consistent with that of these instruments, had implications for the methodology of this study. These implications are discussed in detail in Chapter III.

## **The Impact of Adverse Experiences Prior to College on Psychological Well-Being**

Adverse experiences early in life often have long-lasting influences on an individual, which inevitably continue into college. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study conducted by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente (cited in Felitti et al., 1998) examined specific events (e.g., substance use in the home, domestic violence) that served

as risk factors and placed individuals at higher vulnerability for lifetime physical illness. The majority of participants (52%) experienced at least one adverse experience during childhood. The study found the higher number of adverse experiences individuals encountered, the more physical ailments they would experience as an adult (Felitti et al., 1998). Similarly, Filipkowski, Heron, and Smyth (2016) examined events such as loss of a family member or friend, illness, or familial distress. These events were treated as predictor variables due to their ability to forecast physical symptoms, stress, and risky behaviors (e.g., alcohol and drug use, sexual partners; Filipkowski et al., 2016). Results revealed exposure to these events prior to college was linked with elevated stress levels and involvement in various forms of risky behaviors. Further, higher numbers of physical symptoms were reported. These results were important in order to understand the connection between early life experiences, including those involving parents and caregivers, and their impact later on in life. Additionally, they represented the need for increased attention to preventing adverse experiences or mitigating the negative effects of these experiences. Now that the impact of negative experiences prior to college has been noted, difficulties individuals might face during the transition to college are documented.

### **Psychological Well-Being and the College Years**

#### **Transitioning to College**

Across the developmental lifespan, transitioning through life stages can often be a stressful time (Goldstein, Boxer, & Rudolph, 2015; Mikal, Rice, Abeyta, & DeVilbiss, 2013). Graduating high school and attending college is a major transitory period for young adults, which can be a vulnerable time for individuals (Child Mind Institute, 2019). In the process of adjusting to a new college campus in a potentially new



geographical area and navigating more stringent academic expectations, young adults are sometimes uprooted from their social support systems.

Adjustment throughout this transition period was the focus of a study conducted by Conley, Kirsch, Dickson, and Bryant (2014). Gender differences across PWB, social well-being, and resiliency factors were examined. Utilizing data from a sample of 2,095 undergraduate students, Conley and colleagues studied the aforementioned constructs one week before the beginning of college, at the end of fall semester, and at the end of spring semester. At the first measurement, males reported lower use of coping mechanisms (e.g., positive self-talk). Psychological well-being dropped significantly from a week before college to the end of fall semester. Females continued to experience decreased PWB into the second semester while males' well-being plateaued over time. These findings were consistent with those of Ridner et al. (2016) who also found PWB decreased when first arriving to college. However, Ridner and colleagues found college students' PWB increased toward the end of their first year. The finding that college students experience decreased psychological well-being during the transition to college reflected the need for continued research about protective factors and the implementation of systems-wide change to promote well-being.

Some individuals arrive to college with vulnerabilities for decreased PWB. These vulnerabilities might stem from mental disorders or chronic exposure to negative experiences such as those reported in the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (Felitti et al, 1998). Regarding mental disorders, the NAMI (2016) stated the onset of 75% mental disorders was before age 24. The NAMI further stated that about 20% of college students were diagnosed with a mental disorder. Coupled with these statistics, research

has indicated the potential downfall these students might face during their college careers.

### **Academic Performance Throughout College**

It is concerning that college students experience lowered PWB given the connection between decreased PWB and lower academic performance (Antaramin, 2015, 2017). Antaramin (2015) collected data on PWB, symptoms of mental illness, and college academic performance from 561 college students. Results revealed students with high, self-reported PWB and the lack of clinical symptoms maintained the highest grades. Conversely, students who reported lower PWB and higher amounts of psychopathologic symptoms performed lower than more well-adjusted participants (Antaramin, 2015). In a following study, Antaramin (2017) examined the link between a specific component of PWB (life satisfaction) and college grade point average (GPA). Life satisfaction of participants was divided into three life satisfaction levels: low, average, and high. The high life satisfaction group had significantly higher GPAs than the participants in the low life satisfaction group. They also obtained higher GPAs than participants who reported having average life satisfaction (Antaramin, 2017). These results were similar to the results from Antaramin's (2015) first study, which also suggested that students with higher PWB obtained higher academic outcomes with regard to grades. These results indicated the importance of researching and supporting factors that promote PWB in college.

### **Academic Attrition**

A relatively large amount of research has been dedicated to examining the association between components of PWB, such as mental health and self-esteem, and

educational outcomes (Beauvais, Stewart, DeNisco, & Beauvais, 2014; Maher et al., 2013; Rose, Lindsey, Xiao, Finigan-Carr, & Joe, 2017). Research also examined drop-out rates among high school students with mental illnesses. These studies were particularly relevant given that dropping out in high school due to mental illness reflected lower amounts of students with mental illnesses attending college in the first place. In addition to studying associations between the presence of trauma histories and high school attrition, Porche et al. (2011) examined the connection between mental illness and high school attrition. Using the data of 2,532 participants from the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys, Porche et al. found a significantly higher drop-out rate among students with childhood onset mental illnesses than students without these illnesses. The drop-out rate for the former was 19.5% and 13.2% for the latter. Internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depressive disorders were two of the most common mental illnesses present with rates of 14.62% and 8.87%, respectively. The drop-out rate for participants with anxiety disorders was 14.76% while the drop-out rate for participants with depressive disorders was 17.70%. Externalizing disorders such as PTSD and conduct disorder were present at rates of 19.55% and 28.51%, respectively. These results reflected the importance of preventive work and social-emotional screenings in elementary school as a way to address and mitigate the influences of mental illnesses early.

Several large-scale studies assessed mental illnesses and college attrition including those by the WHO (2016) and NAMI (2016). As part of the World Mental Health Survey Initiative, the WHO collected data on the prevalence of mental disorders and functioning utilizing the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (Kessler &

Üstün, 2004). Although somewhat dated, this initiative represented a global effort to understand how psychopathology influenced people across domains of life. Using this data, Auerbach and colleagues (2016) examined differences between individuals, the onset of mental disorders, and college outcomes. Several interesting findings arose from this study. The data revealed a larger percentage of students who left college without graduating had a mental disorder; of the general student population, 22.3% reported a mental illness, whereas 30.2% of students who prematurely left the university reported a mental illness. The most common mental illnesses in students who dropped out were anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and substance use disorders (Auerbach et al., 2016).

Gruttadaro and Crudo (2012) conducted a study on college students, mental health, and college attrition. Participants included current undergraduate and graduate students, college graduates, former college students, and incoming students. Sixty-four percent of the former college students who dropped out reported leaving college due to mental health issues (e.g. depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder). When questioned about what factors would have made it less likely that they would have dropped out, participants indicated a strong social system in the form of support groups (Gruttadaro & Crudo, 2012). These findings were consistent with those by Boyraz et al. (2016) who also linked psychological conditions (e.g., PTSD, depressive symptomatology) with a higher likelihood of dropping out. Using the data from an African American sample, Boyraz et al. found students with clinical levels of PTSD had higher rates of college attrition than did non-clinical students. In the same study, Boyraz et al. found college students' first semester GPAs mediated the relationship between depressive symptoms and dropping out of college.

Thus far, mental illnesses were the only component of PWB presented in connection to college attrition. However, a lack of social connectedness has also been linked with dropping out. Allen, Robbins, Casillas, and Oh (2008) included social connectedness in their study surrounding factors that influenced college attrition and found college students' level of social connectedness was significantly related to college attention. Namely, the higher social connectedness participants reported, the more likely they were to stay enrolled in college (Allen et al., 2008). A form of social support is now presented.

### **Romantic Relationships as Protective Factors**

As previously documented, healthy social support promotes PWB. Romantic relationships are a specific type of social support that have been shown to positively influence PWB (Johnson et al., 2012; Whitton et al., 2013). For example, Johnson et al. (2012) used data from a sample of traditional college students to examine stages of identity development, romantic relationship, and well-being. In this study, well-being was conceptualized as high self-esteem, low levels of loneliness, and low levels of anxiety and avoidance. Researchers found a positive correlation between level of romantic relationship intimacy and well-being. This study provided support that romantic relationships during the college age years promoted healthy PWB. This was important given the previously mentioned results regarding psychological distress and college attrition (Johnson et al., 2012).

Love and Holder (2016) found similar results. Researchers studied the specific mechanisms within romantic relationships that were linked with healthy PWB. With a sample of undergraduate students, Love and Holder collected data on various affects

(e.g., happiness, depression), well-being, relationship quality, and satisfaction with life. Results indicated gender differences existed in the relationship between romantic relationships and well-being. For male participants, the two components of romantic relationships linked with well-being were commitment and trust. Components of relationships associated with female participants' well-being were commitment, satisfaction, romance, love, trust, and intimacy. Thus, it appeared relationships could positively influence PWB when certain healthy qualities were present.

In a similar study, Whitton et al. (2013) surveyed undergraduate students about their relationship status and a narrow piece of PWB: depressive symptomatology. Data regarding alcoholic intake were also collected. It was revealed that females who were involved in romantic relationships reported less symptom characteristics of depression than females who were not. This same relationship was not seen in male participants. However, both female and male participants reported less problematic alcoholic intake whenever they were in romantic relationships. These findings emphasized the importance of social support to protect against certain forms of psychopathology and poor decision-making (Whitton et al., 2013).

Till, Tran, and Niederkrotenthaler (2016) continued this examination between romantic relationships and depression while specifically focusing on suicidality. Utilizing an Austrian sample, their study assessed differences in PWB across participants of varying relationship statuses and reported levels of relationship satisfaction. Participants who reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction reported higher levels of suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms, mainly hopelessness, than did participants with high relationship satisfaction. Further, participants who were not in a relationship reported

lower levels of depression than did participants who were in a relationship. These results reflected the importance of relationship satisfaction on the ability of romantic relationships to function as a protective factor.

Braithwaite, Delevi, and Fincham (2010) found similar results. In their study, they examined commonalities among college students who were in romantic relationships. Variables of interest included mental and physical health, sexual activities, and risky behaviors (e.g., drinking and driving). Using data from 1,621 college participants, those who were in serious relationships experienced less symptoms of mental illness. Further, these participants engaged in less risky behaviors. However, no significant differences were found between individuals who were in relationships and their physical health (Braithwaite et al., 2010).

### **The Differential Impact of Romantic Relationships on Psychological Well-Being**

As evidenced by research conducted by Till et al. (2016), positive influences of romantic relationships did not automatically occur because an individual was in a relationship. Instead, researchers considered the quality of romantic relationships and satisfaction individuals derived from them. As was seen in Love and Holder (2016), relationship satisfaction existed when certain components (e.g. love, commitment) were present. Therefore, relationships that lacked these or other healthy characteristics might not produce the same positive benefits for PWB (Love & Holder, 2016; Till et al., 2016;).

As seen in a study presented later in this paper, Peters and Jamieson (2016) found individuals involved in dyads with emotion suppression experienced physiological stress responses such as heightened cortisol levels. Long-term exposure to such responses overwhelms the body's protective and coping abilities, thus having a detrimental

influence on the body's physical and cognitive health (Owens et al., 2015; Peters & Jamieson, 2016). Therefore, experiencing these physiological and psychological responses did not equate to the same positive benefits as healthy relationships.

### **Correlates of Relationship Satisfaction**

Because romantic relationships can serve as protective factors, it is important to consider what factors support healthy relationships. By supporting these factors, healthier relationships might be formed, thus providing increased support for individuals' PWB and an overall healthier society. Prior research on relationship satisfaction referred to multiple domains that influenced satisfaction. Those domains are now discussed.

Using a mixed methodology, Malouff, Mundy, Galea, and Bothma (2015) studied satisfaction in long-term relationships. "Exciting activities" and "relationship-maintaining activities" were two themes produced by participants' responses (Malouff et al., 2015, p. 227). The responses in the former category included playful and sexual activities while the latter category included responses like communication and mutually-enjoyable activities (Malouff et al., 2015). While the responses in the exciting activities theme aligned with relationship excitement, the relationship-maintaining activities were significantly correlated to relationship satisfaction. Therefore, individuals who participated in activities with their partner, took time to effectively communicate, and maintained relative independence within their relationship were satisfied with their relationship (Malouff et al., 2015).

In addition to mutually-enjoyable activities, conflict resolution was identified as a supporter of relationship satisfaction. Roberson, Fish, Olmstead, and Fincham (2015) longitudinally examined conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction among college



students. Conflict resolution was conceptualized as the utilization of effective communication patterns and perspective-taking while the measurement of relationship satisfaction included ratings on quality of the relationship (Roberson et al., 2015). Higher levels of conflict resolution at the first data collection were significantly, positively correlated with relationship satisfaction at the second data collection, which was seven weeks later (Roberson et al., 2015).

An integral part of conflict resolution is utilizing effective communication, especially during times of relational stress and disagreement. Hiew, Halford, van de Vijver, and Liu (2016) examined the role of communication in relationship satisfaction as well as differences in communication and relationship satisfaction across Western and Chinese cultures. The sample included couples who were either both from one of these cultures or one partner from each of these cultures. Data were collected via self-report instruments and interviews. Couples also engaged in discussions that centered around both positive times and negative aspects in their relationships. These discussions were coded for validating and non-validating responses (Hiew et al., 2016). Results from a three-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that generally the quality of women's partners' communication in the relationship predicted levels of relationship satisfaction for both partners. More specifically, when women partners displayed more positive affect and engaged in intimacy-supporting behaviors (e.g., self-disclosure), higher relationship satisfaction was reported (Hiew et al., 2016). This study demonstrated the importance of positive communication in creating satisfied romantic partners.

### **Correlates of Relationship Dissatisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction is threatened in the absence of the aforementioned constructs. Other aspects, such as a lack of partner responsiveness and emotional suppression, threaten overall relationship satisfaction as well.

#### **Lack of Partner Responsiveness**

Fivecoat, Tomlinson, Aron, and Caprariello (2015) assessed the role partner responsiveness played in predicting relationship satisfaction. Participants included partners in heterosexual or homosexual romantic relationships. After having been separated at the beginning of the study, partners of each dyad were allowed to communicate via a computer program. The tasks were marketed to a portion of participants as a “self-expansion” task (Fivecoat et al., 2015, p. 368) that promoted an encouraging view of the task. The other group of participants were told they were going to engage in a stressful task (e.g., being videotaped). Unknowing to the partners, communication was stopped between the partners and instead, a researcher pretended to respond as if the researcher was the participant’s partner. The researcher then delivered either active or passive messages. Results revealed participants who were exposed to passive responding from their partners reported less relationship satisfaction. Although small, this difference was significant. This study demonstrated the detriments emotionally unresponsive communication could have on overall relationship satisfaction (Fivecoat et al., 2015).

#### **Emotion Suppression**

Impett et al. (2012) defined emotional suppression as “when people attempt to inhibit or conceal the emotions that they experience” (p. 707) and stated it often occurred

when an individual made substantial sacrifices (e.g., doing something for their partner that they do not truly want to). For their study, Impett and colleagues accurately hypothesized that individuals would experience lower relationship satisfaction on days when they suppressed their emotions. Interestingly, the amount of emotional suppression reported during the initial data collection was linked to relationship status three months later. More specifically, participants who reported higher amounts of emotional suppression during the diary data collection phase were less satisfied with their relationship. Researchers attributed differences to authenticity or the ability to behave in ways consistent with an individual's beliefs as mediators between suppression and relationship satisfaction (Impett et al., 2012).

Emotional suppression has also been studied with other constructs that indirectly and negatively influence relationship satisfaction. For example, individuals who were in emotional suppressive interactions demonstrated less physical intimacy than those in emotional expressive interactions (Peters & Jamieson, 2016). This result was concerning given that research has positively linked physical intimacy with overall relationship satisfaction (Leavitt & Willoughby, 2014; McNulty, Wenner, & Fisher, 2016).

### **Psychological Well-Being and Relationship Satisfaction**

Mental illness can present unique challenges to romantic relationships, which might be influential in both partners' perceptions of relationship satisfaction. The following section presents more from studies that have examined links between relationship satisfaction and PWB.

Sharabi, Delaney, and Knobloch (2016) qualitatively examined the role major depressive disorder played in romantic relationships. While participants were able to

glean positive aspects of their relationships that could be attributed to depression (e.g., feelings of understanding in relationships where both partners had depression), several difficulties were mentioned as results of at least one partner having this diagnosis. One such challenge was emotional contagion within the dyad. More specifically, participants reported absorbing the negative emotionality of their depressed partners (Sharabi et al., 2016). This indicated they often felt sad or experienced negative emotions by being around their partners. Another challenge presented to the relationship as a result of depression was side effects of one or both partners' medications. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which are commonly prescribed for depressive and anxiety disorders, were linked with decreased libido and might be linked with lower sexual activity (Hogan, Noury, Healy, & Mangin, 2014). Research by Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) found sexual intimacy was positively associated with relationship satisfaction, which might have had implications for individuals who were taking serotonin reuptake inhibitors and their romantic partners. When taken together, it was plausible to suggest decreased libido and subsequent lowered sexual activity could be responsible for decreased relationship satisfaction (Sharabi et al., 2016).

Aside from depression, the ability of social anxiety to predict an individual's romantic relationship satisfaction has also been examined. Porter and Chambless (2014) collected data on those constructs from a sample of 163 undergraduate, heterosexual, college romantic couples. Correlational and regression analyses indicated the presence of social anxiety in an individual was significantly related to and predictive of relationship satisfaction. More specifically, men who reported symptoms consistent with social anxiety also reported feeling less satisfied with their relationship. This relationship was

small but significant (Porter & Chambless, 2014). A stronger association was found between women's social anxiety symptoms and relationship dissatisfaction. For both male and females, social anxiety significantly predicted relationship dissatisfaction (Porter & Chambless, 2014). These results added further evidence for the important role PWB plays in romantic relationship satisfaction. Because mental illnesses have been found to be associated with romantic relationship satisfaction, several models are examined to see which model fit the data better; they are further explained in Chapter III.

### **Emotional Expression in Romantic Relationships**

If emotion suppression can be detrimental to satisfaction in romantic relationships, what can be said about emotion expression? Several forms of emotion expression exist including verbal and nonverbal. This study focused on only verbal emotion expression--the action of becoming vulnerable by opening up about one's "inner experiences" (Harrison, 2013-2014, p. 4). In the literature, several terms described the openness with one's romantic partner surrounding emotion including self-disclosure and emotional intimacy. Because varying terms have somewhat similar meanings, it was important to define and specify which term would be used. The current study sought to research how parental meta-emotion philosophy influenced emotional expression as well as the influence of emotion expression on romantic relationship satisfaction. Therefore, emotional expression was studied instead of self-disclosure.

Emotion expression has been studied within the context of both platonic and romantic relationships. Chervonsky and Hunt (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 47 studies to learn more about the potential benefits of emotion expression. Of particular interest were social outcomes that included "unacquainted liking, acquainted liking,

social support, social relationship quality and satisfaction, and romantic relationship quality” (Chervonsky & Hunt, 2017, p. 676). Results indicated emotion expression was positively related to these social outcomes; however, these relationships were not significant. The authors stated a potential reason for these insignificant results could be the roles context and emotion regulation played in emotion expression. For example, emotion expression might not be appropriate if the emotion being displayed is incongruent with the environment. Chervonsky and Hunt provided the example of an individual who expressed a positive emotion (e.g., happiness) at a funeral. Displaying signs of happiness, such as laughing, might not support constructive social outcomes such as social support or acquaintance liking. Inappropriately expressing negative emotions (e.g., anger) might also produce negative social outcomes for an individual if he or she does not regulate the manner in which the emotions are expressed. For example, behaviorally acting out (e.g., throwing items) as emotion expression might cause others to distance themselves from the individual, which is considered a negative social outcome. As Graham et al. (2008) stated, “Expressing fear, anxiety, sadness, and annoyance must occur selectively” (p. 396).

Contrasting results were found by Graham et al. (2008) when they studied expression of negative emotions and social connectedness. Whereas Chervonsky and Hunt (2017) found positive, yet insignificant connections between negative emotions and social connectedness, Graham and colleagues found positive, significant relationships between willingness to express negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anxiety, annoyance, fear) and social connectedness. In this study, social connectedness was assessed by quantitatively measuring the number of meaningful experiences (e.g., eating meals

together, studying together) participants had had the week before data collection. After controlling for sex, personality characteristics, and self-esteem, higher willingness to divulge negative emotions predicted higher intimacy (Graham et al., 2008).

As with many other characteristics, a large determinant of an individual's emotional expression is parental boundaries surrounding the acceptability, experience, and expression of emotions in childhood (Garner, Robertson, & Smith, 1997; Pasalich, Waschbusch, Dadds, & Hawes, 2013). This learning of emotions is part of a concept called emotion socialization, which is now explored (Eisenberg et al., 1998).

### **Emotion Socialization**

Individuals experience emotion socialization in one form or another. For some, the main source of emotion socialization is their parents, while friends are the main source for others (Parr, Zeman, Braunstein, & Price, 2016; Shewark & Blandon, 2015). Although both are important, the focus of this paper was on emotion socialization of children by their parents. According to Eisenberg et al. (1998), emotion socialization is tripartite and includes “(a) parental reactions to children’s emotions, (b) socializers’ discussion of emotion, and (c) socializers’ expression of emotion” (p. 1).

Research on emotion socialization was vast. Leerkes, Supple, Su, and Cavanaugh (2015) studied the influence of childhood emotion socialization practices on perinatal women of African American and European American races. Participants were asked to retrospectively report how their parents responded when they expressed emotions. They were given seven options from which to pick including “minimizing reactions” and “emotion-focused reactions” (Leerkes et al., 2015, p. 1). Information on psychopathology, specifically depression and anger levels, were collected. Differences

between ethnicity were examined for all variables. Emotion socialization practices, such as minimizing and disciplinary, were significantly correlated with higher depression scores. These results were inconsistent across races, such that they only held true for European Americans. Anger was not a significant moderator in the model for either ethnicity (Leerkes et al., 2015). These results pointed to the importance and longevity of influence of parental behaviors, specifically regarding emotion socialization, on mental health.

In addition to mental health, researchers studied how emotion socialization practices influenced children's social-emotional characteristics. McCord and Raval (2016) examined the nature of mothers' responses to their children's emotions and the frequency and nature of their own emotion expressivity. The sample included European American and Indian mothers. Results indicated European American mothers reported more supportive responses to their children's negative emotions. When non-supportive responses were reported, higher levels of behavioral problems (e.g., internalizing, externalizing behaviors) were reported in their children. Further, Indian immigrant mothers reported utilizing non-supportive responses when addressing their children's negative emotions (McCord & Raval, 2016). These results reflected how emotion socialization through mothers' responses to their children's emotions and their own emotion expressivity impacted child characteristics.

As continuously recognized by many cognitive psychologists, behavior is influenced by thoughts and an individual's internal belief system (Beck, 2008; Meichenbaum, 1993). Research surrounding emotion socialization also examined internal processes involved prior to the actual emotion socialization behavior. This work



was primarily conducted by John Gottman with the assistance of Lynn Katz, and Carole Hooven (1996, 1997). The following section provides a brief history of Gottman et al.'s work and how a construct, termed parental meta-emotion philosophy, was conceptualized and studied.

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy**

In the mid-1980s, John Gottman (Gottman et al., 1997) began to take an ecological perspective when he integrated his prior work on parenting and children. Out of this work came an area of research relating to parent-child relationships. Together with Katz and Hunter (2007), Gottman put forth the parental meta-emotion philosophy. This concept refers to how individuals perceive their own emotions and those of others. This formalized belief system, which guides an individual's reactions to their emotions and others' emotions, was termed "meta-emotion structure" (Gottman et al., 1997, p. 7). Parental meta-emotion philosophy was seen as the precursor to emotion socialization as thoughts and feelings were thought to influence behavior (Stettler & Katz, 2014).

Utilizing the Meta-Emotion Interview (MEI), Gottman et al. (1996) qualitatively examined patterns of emotions and thoughts parents had regarding their emotions and those of their children. They termed this construct "parental meta-emotion philosophy" (Gottman et al., 1996, p. 243). Their original work, which was described in their 1996 book and 1997 article, qualitatively gained information about parental meta-emotion utilizing the MEI. From the data gathered using this interview, Gottman et al. (1997) delineated among four types of parental meta-emotion philosophies: coaching, dismissive, disapproval, and "high acceptance, low coaching" (p. 64). Each category differed from the other in three ways: awareness of one's emotions, awareness of one's

child's emotions, and coaching of their child's emotions (Gottman et al., 1997; Stettler & Katz, 2014). Gottman et al. (1997) discussed three ways or "dimensions" in which the categories of parental meta-emotion philosophy differed from each other (p. 48): awareness of one's own emotions, awareness of the emotions of one's child, and coaching.

### **Awareness of One's Emotions**

According to Gottman et al. (1997), the awareness an individual had regarding his/her own emotions included the abilities to recognize when one was experiencing an emotion and to delineate between various kinds of emotions. Upon this recognition, individuals who were highly aware of their emotions were also able to talk about their experiences with different emotions.

### **Awareness of Child's Emotions**

As would be expected, awareness of the emotions of one's child includes many of the same abilities as recognizing one's own emotions. It requires an individual, or a parent in the case of the current study, to distinguish how his/her child is feeling. This awareness lends itself to behavior in several ways. Optimally, a parent who is aware of his/her child's emotions would engage in conversations with his/her child and his or her experience with his/her emotions. Secondly, an aware parent would help his/her child to engage in preferred activities to mitigate negative emotional experiences while still providing validation of the child's emotions. In an initial study, Gottman et al. (1996) qualitatively examined differences among parents' levels of awareness and their reactions to their child's emotion expression. Parent participants' responses who were more aware of their child's emotions viewed emotions as a necessity to the human experience.

Moreover, they felt “it was good, healthy, and positive to pay attention to emotion” (Gottman et al., 1996, p. 267). This contrasted with the view of parent participants who lacked awareness of their child’s emotion and thought emotions were “toxic” and “dangerous” (Gottman et al., 1996, p. 267). These same participants often stated their experiences with negative emotions created discomfort; therefore, they sought to suppress their emotions. As previously mentioned, parental meta-emotion was the precursor to parental emotion socialization behavior. Thus, this finding was a demonstration of how parental meta-emotion philosophy impacted emotion socialization (Gottman et al., 1996).

### **Coaching**

The third dimension that differentiated categories of parental meta-emotion philosophy was coaching. This term referred to parents who used their child’s negative emotions as “opportunities for intimacy or teaching” and who helped their “child in verbally labelling the child’s emotions” (Gottman et al., 1996, p. 244). Additionally, these parents authenticated their child’s experiences with emotions. Coaching involved the awareness of a child’s emotions (Gottman et al., 1996; Stettler & Katz, 2014).

Although not included as a dimension of parental meta-emotion philosophy, a parent’s acceptance of emotions and emotional expression has been noted as an important component in meta-emotion and an area of difference across meta-emotion categories. Stettler and Katz (2014) specifically mentioned a part of emotion awareness includes the acknowledgement of “low intensity” emotions (p. 163). Assigning similar weight to parental acceptance of his/her child’s emotion, Katz and Gottman (as cited in Gottman et al., 1996) included acceptance of emotion into their checklist coding system of the MEI.

The next section discusses three main categories of the parental meta-emotion philosophy.

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy Categorization**

**Emotion-coaching.** Emotion-coaching refers to caregivers' cognitive and emotional responses to children's experiences and expressions of emotion. Caregivers who emotionally coach accept that their children experience positive and negative emotions and allow expression within appropriate bounds of both. These parents validate their children's experiences with negative emotions and empathetically and collaboratively help their child process through their emotions. After their children have expressed their emotions, emotion-coaching parents help their child learn lessons from each experience with negative emotions (Gottman et al., 1997). Because one of the dimensions of parental meta-emotion philosophy is termed coaching, it is relatively obvious the ways in which emotion-coaching individuals fare on the coaching dimension. According to Gottman and colleagues (1996), examples from their data reflected emotion-coaching included validating the emotions of their children and collaboratively working with their children to problem solve.

**Emotionally-dismissive.** Emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was another form proposed by Gottman and colleagues (1996) and was conceptualized as a negative view of one's and others' emotions. The dismissive category included parents who focused on solving the problem instead of encouraging their children to process through their negative emotions. Further, emotionally-dismissive parents viewed their children's negative emotions as inappropriate and requiring discipline (Gottman et al., 1996). Their thoughts regarding emotions, as

reported in Gottman et al. (1996), included thinking children experiencing anger as funny. These attitudes influenced the way in which these parents responded to their children. For example, an emotionally-dismissive participant found his/her child's experience with negative emotions humorous and laughed at their child (Gottman et al., 1996).

**Emotionally-disapproving.** Similar to emotionally-dismissive parents, emotionally-disapproving parents view and respond inappropriately toward their emotions and their children's emotions. Gottman et al. (1996) used the words "critical" and "unempathetic" regarding parents' views of their children's emotion experiences and expression (p. 67). Whereas emotionally-dismissive parents focused on the problem rather than their child's negative emotions, emotionally-disapproving parents demurred the presence of negative emotions in their children (Gottman et al., 1996). Emotionally-dismissive and emotionally-disapproving parents presented similarly on dimensions on parental meta-emotion philosophy. They both engaged in low levels of coaching and low awareness of their emotions and their children's emotions. These similarities between emotionally-dismissive and emotionally-disapproving had implications for the conceptualization of parental meta-emotion philosophy in the current study (see Chapter III).

**High acceptance, low coaching.** The final meta-emotion style put forth by Gottman and colleagues (1997) was high acceptance, low coaching. It aligned with dismissive and disapproving types in that it was considered negative. Parents who were highly accepting of their children's emotions differed from dismissive and disapproving types in that they allowed room for their children to feel emotion. However, once their

children displayed these emotions, these parents neglected to help their children using emotion-coaching because they did not view emotions “as a way to teach their child something valuable about life” (Gottman et al., 1997, p. 64).

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy and Emotion Socialization**

Parental meta-philosophy is mainly comprised of the attitudes and awareness parents hold regarding their emotion and their children’s emotions (Gottman et al., 1997). However, one component of meta-emotion is behavioral. The dimension of parental meta-emotion philosophy that refers to parents’ behavioral responses to their children’s experience and expression of emotion is coaching. Coaching refers to a set of parental behaviors that help their children process through their emotions, understand and differentiate between various emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, fear), and consider coping mechanisms to mitigate negative emotions.

One study explicitly linked the parental meta-emotion philosophy categories with emotion socialization behaviors. In a review of Eisenberg et al. (1998), Leerkes et al. (2015) stated six ways parents respond to their children’s reactions: “emotion-focused, problem-focused, expressive encouragement, minimizing, punitive, and distress” (pp. 1855-1856). These aligned with categories put forth in the parental meta-emotion philosophy put forth by Gottman et al. (1996). Emotion-focused, problem-focused, and expressive encouragement reactions aligned with the emotion coaching parental responses while the minimizing, punitive, and distress reactions belonged in the dismissive and disapproving categories.

Past literature also stated that emotion socialization referred to behaviors parents engaged in when their children experienced emotions. The line between the behavioral

component (e.g., coaching) of parental meta-emotion philosophy and emotion socialization was indistinct and not well-addressed in the literature. Thus, it was vital the current study differentiated and defined the differences between parental meta-emotion philosophy and emotion socialization. Based on information from Gottman et al. (1997) about parental meta-emotion philosophy and the conceptualizations of this construct in the literature, this study included both the cognitive and behavioral components of parental meta-emotion philosophy.

### **Temporal Changes in Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy**

Parents are the sounding boards for their children's emotions, especially during their children's earliest ages (Stettler & Katz, 2014). In addition to children's progress through developmental stages and subsequent preferred social support, Stettler and Katz (2014) suggested children's cognitive maturation and parental expectations of behavioral control were potential reasons why parental meta-emotion philosophy might change over time. Executive functioning, an expected and natural component of cognitive maturation responsible for self-regulation, includes control over and inhibition of inappropriate expressions of emotion (Riggs, Jahromi, Razza, Dillworth-Bart, & Mueller, 2016). As this developed over time, children not only moved from relying on parents for emotion regulation to independent regulation but were also typically able to express emotions within appropriate bounds (Blasco, Saxton, & Gerrie, 2014).

Research by Stettler and Katz (2014) indicated that consistent with their child's maturation, parental meta-emotion philosophy adjusts over their child's development. Stettler and Katz (2014) longitudinally examined how parental meta-emotion including awareness, acceptance, and coaching changed regarding sadness, anger, and fear. The

first data collection occurred when the participants' children were around age five while the second data collection occurred when the participants' children were around age nine. The final data collection occurred when the children were age 11. Overall, the results indicated that when children were around age five, the parents were aware of and accepted that their children experienced emotions. They also reported engaging in coaching behaviors. However, as the study approached the second data collection, parents reported decreases in these three areas. At the final data collection, parents' reports of awareness, acceptance, and coaching increased beyond their initial reports on these constructs (Stettler & Katz, 2014). These results reflected parental meta-emotion philosophy changes over time, potentially due to varying needs the children had at different developmental stages.

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy and Child Outcomes**

Associations have been made between the various forms of parental meta-emotion philosophy and child characteristics. Children parented with the emotionally-dismissive style displayed higher levels of internalizing symptoms. This association was demonstrated in a study by Cohodes, Chen, and Lieberman (2017) in which an adverse childhood event, specifically exposure to domestic violence, was examined. Participants included mothers and preschoolers who witnessed domestic violence. Parental meta-emotion philosophy was examined as a moderator between exposure to domestic violence and internalizing symptoms. Cohodes and colleagues found when mothers used an emotionally-dismissive style of acknowledging and responding to their children's emotion expression, their children demonstrated higher levels of internalizing symptoms.



This research pointed to the potential use of emotion-coaching behaviors in mitigating the impact of adverse childhood experiences (Cohodes et al., 2017).

A larger amount of research demonstrated positive qualities that children who were raised by emotion-coaching parents often displayed including higher social skills, heightened self-esteem, and lower internalizing problems (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997; Hurrell, Houwing, & Hudson, 2016; Katz & Hunter, 2007). In their study, Denham et al. (1997) studied the influence of parents' emotional expressiveness, parental emotional responsiveness to their children's emotional display, and parental coaching during interactions. Preschoolers with the strongest social skills had parents who were more adept at controlling their own emotions (Denham et al., 1997). One possible reason was provided by Albert Bandura's (1973) social learning theory, which posited that individuals learned how to react by observing others' behaviors. In the study by Denham et al. (1997), preschoolers of parents who were less able to control their emotions might have learned less appropriate behaviors with regard to emotional expression. It was possible these learned behaviors transferred to peer interactions and resulted in overall lower social competence.

The study by Katz and Hunter (2007) found a link between symptoms of psychopathology (e.g., depression) and parental meta-emotion philosophy. Another study (Hurrell et al., 2016) found an association between a different form of psychopathology (e.g., anxiety) and parental meta-emotion philosophy. Hurrell et al. (2016) used a sample partly comprised by participants with anxiety diagnoses and partly by participants without anxiety diagnoses. Given the results of previous studies, it was

not surprising that there was a lower rate of anxiety disorders among children and adolescents with parents who engaged in the emotion-coaching style.

Parental meta-emotion philosophy has been linked with pervasive areas of children's lives including mental health and social competence. Taken together, these results reflected the importance of supporting parental behaviors that promote healthy outcomes in children. The literature extended into how parental meta-emotion philosophy expands into the adolescent developmental period. That literature is now presented.

### **Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy and Adolescent Outcomes**

The majority of research centered around parental meta-emotion philosophy and adolescent outcomes focused on symptoms of and clinical levels of psychopathology. In addition to higher self-esteem, emotion-coaching has been associated with lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors in adolescents (Katz & Hunter, 2007). Data on 30 adolescents and their mothers were collected on levels of depression, parental meta-emotion philosophy, and interaction dynamics. Adolescents with mothers who were aware and expressive of their own emotions, which was consistent with the emotion-coaching philosophy, had overall higher self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms and externalizing difficulties than children with mothers who were not aware or expressive with their own emotions (Katz & Hunter, 2007).

Katz et al. (2014) examined differences in parental responses to displays of positive emotions across adolescent participants. Out of 107 participants, 47 displayed clinical levels of depression. The remaining 60 participants were considered neurotypical. Participants and their parents completed separate interviews regarding the

parents' meta-emotion philosophy. A more specific measure assessed how participants viewed their parents' responses to displays of positive emotions while parents completed three additional surveys to report their responses to their adolescent's display of happiness. Results were separated into participants' reports and their parents' reports. Based on child participants' responses to questionnaires, parents of participants in the group with depression utilized more minimizing reactions to their children than parents of the neurotypical group. Results from the interviews with the parent participants indicated parents of neurotypical adolescent participants welcomed displays of happiness from their adolescents. This contrasted with reports from parents of adolescent participants with depression who were not as accepting of expressions of happiness (Katz et al., 2014). These results were indicative of how individuals continued to be impacted by parental perspectives of emotions and behavior into adolescence. Given the longevity of impact, it was vital that effective parental perceptions and behaviors were promoted in order to foster the most optimistic outcomes for children.

### **Gap in the Literature: Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy and Adult Outcomes**

To this researcher's knowledge, no research has studied parental meta-emotion philosophy and young adult outcomes. The lack of research further reflected and supported the need for preliminary examinations. As was mentioned in the purpose of the study in Chapter I, one purpose of this study was to fill in this gap. However, parental meta-emotion philosophy and emotion socialization are similar in that they refer to parental responses to children's emotions and children learning about emotion

expression. Because they shared this component, research studies on emotion socialization and young adult outcomes were briefly noted.

### **Summary**

Research studies in various arenas have found troubling data with regard to American's psychological well-being (PWB). Psychological well-being refers to the promotion of mental health by using an individual's strengths, social support systems, and positive self-esteem to mitigate life's difficulties and fulfill an individual's purpose in life (Copeland et al., 2016). College students' PWB was of particular interest, given that a large majority of students who ultimately acquired a mental illness had already done so prior to college entry. Further, college is a time of significant change and adjustment that often induces stress. Because romantic relationships can be an important proponent of PWB, it was important to investigate relationship characteristics that supported relationship satisfaction. With regard to relationships and emotions, research has linked individuals' social-emotional characteristics to emotion socialization provided by their caregivers. The precursor to emotion socialization--parental meta-emotion philosophy--has been studied in relation to child and young adolescent outcomes. However, research regarding the indirect and direct effects of parental meta-emotion philosophy into adulthood is lacking. Therefore, further evaluation of the long-term influence of parental meta-emotion philosophy might provide insight into how this variable influences PWB. Given parental meta-emotion philosophy's location early in an individual's development, it might have the ability to be the focus of preventive services with the goal of supporting psychological well-being.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The current chapter presents participant recruitment efforts, instrumentation, procedure protocols, and statistical analyses. As discussed earlier, the main goal of the study was to investigate the influence of parental meta-emotion philosophy, a potentially important yet largely unrecognized factor, on young adult psychological well-being (PWB). Parental meta-emotion philosophy was hypothesized to influence PWB through direct and indirect effects on emotion expression and romantic relationship satisfaction. Finally, the research questions and corresponding statistical analyses are discussed.

#### **Participants**

A target sample of 200 participants was estimated for the study based on suggestions put forth by Comrey and Lee (1992). The recruitment efforts resulted in 223 participants who volunteered to participate in the study. Twenty-seven of these individuals did not finish the survey, which resulted in a 14.8% drop-out rate. The decision to stop data collection before reaching the target of 200 participants was determined by the necessity of the study's design, which required data collection (i.e., test-retest) within the academic semester. The third week of March 2018 was the last week of data collection for the first round. Had participation continued into the following weeks, those participants would have received the second round of data collection after

they would have already started the summer semester or would have been unavailable (e.g., graduation). As discussed in Chapter IV, the sample size after screening was 167. The sample size is also discussed in the limitations section located in Chapter V.

The only two preliminary exclusionary criteria required participants to be undergraduate students and to currently be or have ever been in a romantic relationship. This decision was made to attract and include as many participants as possible as well as exclude data from participants who might be outliers in terms of their characteristics. The data was examined at the cessation of data collection, and 10 participants were excluded based on their age. The age range of these participants was 27-41 years of age. An additional 10 participants were excluded from the data due to them reporting never to have been in a romantic relationship. Decisions regarding the deletion of outliers will be outlined in Chapter Four.

### **Recruitment**

The main recruitment effort took place at a Western university utilizing the university's School of Psychological Services' Research Participant Pool. This Participant Pool provided undergraduate students with a list of research studies that were searching for participants. Eighty-five participants were recruited through the Participant Pool. Per the Participant Pool's recommendations, PSY 120: Principles of Psychology professors were emailed and asked to inform their classes that research studies were available. Participants recruited through this effort and who completed the entire survey were compensated with one Psychology 120 research participation credit. Two advanced school psychology graduate-level students who had completed an advanced psychological assessment course and were trained by the researcher assisted with the

recruitment of participants in two alternative ways. The examiners visited various undergraduate classes and provided a short briefing regarding the study. Secondly, the research assistants placed flyers in the university's dormitories, University Student Center, and main campus buildings. Eighty-two participants were recruited through class visitations and flyers. Upon completion of the survey, these participants received a \$5 Starbucks E-Gift card.

All participants were asked to provide their university identification number and email address. This information allowed the researcher to contact them for the second round of data collection, which occurred two months after the initial round. Those who completed the second round of data collection were compensated with a \$5 Starbucks E-gift card. Additionally, each participant was entered in a drawing to win one of two \$25 gift cards at the store of their choice (e.g., Best Buy, Target, Apple Store).

### **Procedures**

Before data collection began, approval from the University of Northern Colorado's Institutional Review Board was obtained (see Appendix A). After prospective participants emailed the researcher, they were sent the link for the first data collection survey packet (see Appendix B). The first question on the survey inquired about how students heard about the survey. Those recruited through the PSY 120 course were directed to one informed consent while those who were recruited through flyers and class advertisements were directed to a different informed consent (see Appendix C). The informed consent forms were followed by the same survey for participants recruited by both methods. The surveys ended with one of two debriefing forms based on the method of recruitment. The difference in informed consent forms was the compensation

section. PSY 120 participants were compensated with one research participation credit upon completion of the survey. For participants recruited through flyers and class advertisements, a \$5 Starbucks gift card was provided for compensation. The only difference in debriefing forms was the verification code on the flyer and class advertisement participants. On the debriefing form, these participants were instructed to email the researcher the verification code. The purpose of this verification code was twofold. First, the code, along with forced responses on the survey, ensured participants completed the study. Second, it also notified the researcher where to send a gift card. The two informed consent forms and debriefing form are presented in Appendix C.

As previously mentioned in the participants section, six individuals took the survey two times. Their answers from one response did not match. Therefore, the second response from each of these participants was deleted and the first response was utilized in the data analysis. This occurred early on in the data collection during January and February of 2018. Until this point, participants were sent a generic link with no expiration date. To inhibit participants from taking the study two times, the researcher sent personalized links to participants. These links expired within three days of creation. After this switch occurred, there were zero instances of participants taking the survey twice.

Participants from the first round of data collection who agreed to continue in the second round were contacted two months after their initial participation. For several reasons, the decision was made to email participants the week of the two-month mark instead of the exact day. For some participants, the exact day landed on a Friday or weekend. In efforts to gain higher survey completion rate, emails to these participants



were sent earlier in the week. Secondly, emailing participants in bulk proved more time efficient than sending individual emails daily.

The survey packet for the second data collection consisted of the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) and the Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS). In addition, a brief two-question survey asked participants if their relationship status changed from the last time they took the surveys as well as if they planned to enroll at their current university in the summer and fall semesters (see Appendix D). These data were utilized to answer Research Question 3, which compared the PWB of participants who experienced a change in relationship status with those who had not.

Participants were not actively involved in the third round of data collection. During this round, participants' university identification numbers from data round two were utilized to examine if they were still enrolled in the university. In January 2018, a university employee from the Office of Institutional Reporting and Analysis Services agreed to provide the researcher with the enrollment status for each university identification number. In August 2018, university identification numbers and email addresses of individuals who agreed to participate in the second round of data collection were sent in a password-protected document to the aforementioned employee. The researcher received official enrollment data of participants as well as Spring 2018 and Summer 2018 graduation information in September 2018. As seen in the following section, the PWB scores from participants in the first and second rounds of data and participants' psychological well-being scores were analyzed for any differences across enrollment status groups.

## **Data Analysis**

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Q1 What is the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy (as measured by the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire), emotion expression in relationships (as measured by the SEFQ-Revised), and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships (as measured by the Couples Satisfaction Index) and psychological well-being (as measured by the Journey to Wellness Scale)?
  - Q1.1 Does the parental meta-emotion philosophy of participants' caregivers predict satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
  - Q1.2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
- Q2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and psychological well-being?
- Q3 What is the stability of participants' reported psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction about two to three months later for those in different reported relationship statuses?
- Q4 Are there any differences in the psychological well-being profiles (as measured by the JWS) of students who stay in college (at data collection point two) and those who are no longer enrolled in college?

### **Structural Equation Modeling**

Research questions 1.1 and 1.2 were answered utilizing structural equation modeling--a statistical analysis that combines factor analysis and path analysis to provide information on the predictive relationships between various latent variables (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006). To reflect the two areas of structural equation modeling, two models were created and analyzed: the measurement model and the structural model. Similar to factor loadings of items onto components during exploratory factor analysis, the measurement model was produced through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and provided the factor loadings of the indicators onto their respective latent variables. After

the measurement model had been accepted based on fit indices, theoretical guidance, and previous research, the structural model was analyzed. If a measurement model did not converge during the CFA stage, it was not subsequently considered as a structural model (Ahmed, personal communication, 2018,). The structural model provided unstandardized and standardized estimates of the relationships between latent variables as well as the amount of endogenous variable variances accounted for by exogenous variables.

Fit indices, or quantitative gauges of the how well a model reflected the data, were produced for each type of model and compared to recommended levels of fit provided in the literature (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Meyers et al., 2006). The unstandardized and standardized estimates also provided information about the accuracy of the structural model's specification (Meyers et al., 2006).

Another essential component of structural equation modeling was the covariances between latent variables within the confirmatory factor analyses and between the exogeneous variables in the structural model. Kline (2005) referred to covariances as "unstandardized correlations" (p. 12). Through structural equation modeling, the unstandardized covariances became standardized into correlations. Because they were standardized and could be compared across variables within the model, the current study emphasized correlations over covariances.

Kline (2005) outlined six steps of data analysis utilizing structural equation modeling: model specification, model identification, instrument selection, model estimation, model re-specification, and model explanation. Three of these steps--model specification, model identification, and model explanation--were completed before running the data and are described below. Model estimation, model re-specification, and

model explanation are described in Chapter IV. Model explanations are presented in both Chapters IV and V within the discussion of each respective model.

### **Step 1: Model Specification**

Three models were specified for the current study and intentionally designed to reflect the research between individual variables (see Chapter II). When no research was present in previous literature--as was the case with parental meta-emotion philosophy and emotion expression, relationship satisfaction, and psychological well-being in young adulthood--theoretical underpinnings and research hypotheses guided the location of each variable within the model. Overall, models one and two closely aligned. The difference between model one and model two was the directionality of influence between the PWB and relationship satisfaction variables. In Model One (see Figure 2; path *h*), the path runs from relationship satisfaction to PWB, whereas Model Two includes a path from PWB and relationship satisfaction (see Figure 3; path *h*). The decision to separately utilize two recursive models instead of including the bidirectional path within one non-recursive model was based off the data's characteristics and requirements of structural equation modeling. Because the data were cross-sectional, they would not have met the required assumption of causality for non-recursive models (Kline, 2005).

The structural models generally followed a developmental approach. In other words, the model began with two forms of parental meta-emotion philosophy (e.g., emotion-coaching, emotionally-dismissive) that existed early in participants' lives. Because participants were exposed to parental meta-emotion philosophy in their childhood and they were asked about their current emotion expression, relationship satisfaction, and psychological well-being in early adulthood, the researcher thought it

logical to design the model consistent with the variables' relative location in the developmental timespan.

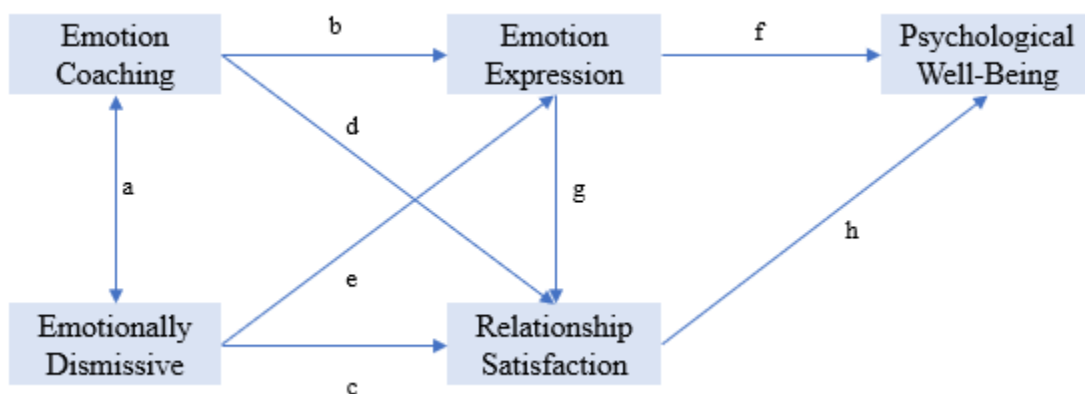


Figure 2. First structural model one exploring direct and indirect effects.

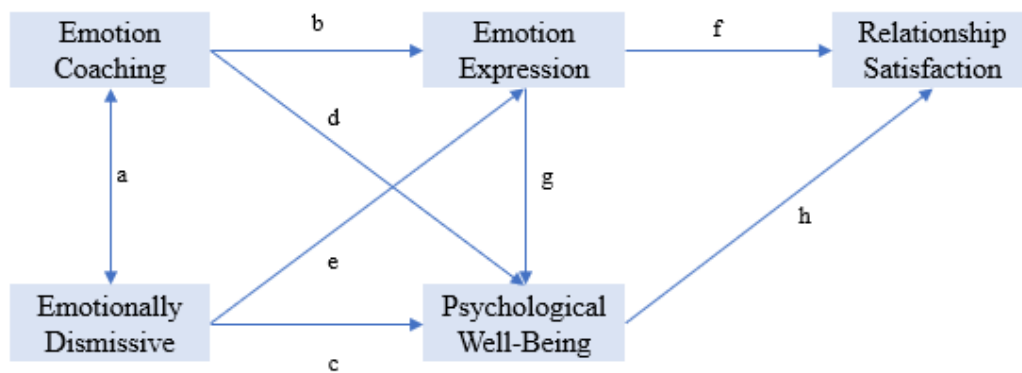


Figure 3. Second structural model examining direct and indirect effects.

Further, previous research indicated PWB and relationship satisfaction influenced each other (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Hogan et al., 2014; Porter & Chambless, 2014; Sharabi et al., 2016). Therefore, the model was designed as a recursive as the model reflected the relationship between relationship satisfaction and PWB. To glean

information on these variables, information was collected through data collection on observed variables. These variables were termed observed variables (Meyers et al., 2016).

In all models, there were five latent variables: emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion, emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion, emotion expression, relationship satisfaction, and psychological well-being. In the models illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, they were represented by rectangles. The emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive variables were exogenous, indicating sources of influence on these variables were not considered within the models. Parental meta-emotion philosophy was comprised by two variables: emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive. This decision was made to be able to observe potential differences in endogenous variables across these two types of parental meta-emotion philosophy as well as to be able to examine any correlation between these variables. The path between emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive was labelled 'a' and represented the previously mentioned correlation analysis. The endogenous variables were emotional expression, psychological well-being, and relationship satisfaction.

From the emotion-coaching variable and emotionally-dismissive variable were paths to relationship satisfaction through emotional expression, paths *b* and *e*, respectively. The emotional expression variable was treated as the mediator in this model. Direct effects of the parental meta-emotion philosophy variables on emotional expression (path *b*), relationship satisfaction (path *f*), and psychological well-being (path *h*) was calculated. Indirect effects of both the parental meta-emotion philosophy variables through the emotional expression mediator were also examined within both

models. The first analysis was completed with psychological well-being as the outcome variable and the second analysis examined relationship satisfaction as the outcome variable. Because research indicated relationship satisfaction could influence PWB, both directions between these variables were assessed. The path between emotional expression and relationship satisfaction ( $f$ ) examined the influence of emotional expression on relationship satisfaction. For each path in the model, a regression coefficient was calculated. As presented in Chapter IV, the specific coefficients described how much of the endogenous variables were accounted for by the exogenous variables and indirect effects.

### **Step 2: Model Identification**

Determining if a model was identified was a two-step process. One aspect of model identification was dependent upon the number of known, or “nonredundant,” variables as well as the number of unknown parameters (Meyers et al., 2016, p. 607). When the number of unknown parameters was subtracted from the number of known variables, the model degrees of freedom,  $df_M$ , was provided. A model was considered identified when the  $df_M \geq 0$  (Kline, 2005). Therefore, the model degrees of freedom was positive,  $df_M \geq$ , and the model was identified.

As it pertained to the measurement model, the second step in the model identification process was “scaling” the latent variable (Kline, 2005, p. 170). This involved the selection of a reference variable and assigning a metric to the latent variable. The need for scaling was due to the nature of working with latent variables. Because the current study did not directly examine the latent variables, they needed to be scaled. In

the measurement model (see Figure 9 in Chapter IV), the scaling was indicated by a dotted line running from the reference variable to the indicator.

### **Step 3: Determine Instrumentation**

**The Journey to Wellness Scale.** To measure participants' psychological well-being, the Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS; Copeland et al., 2016) was utilized. The 80-item JWS consisted of the following 10 positive psychology constructs:

*Adaptability.* The adaptability scale included items that asked participants about their attitudes regarding change and flexibility in thinking. A large focus of existing literature about adaptability revolved around the work environment (Atzil-Slonim, Reshef, Berman, Peri, & Shulman, 2016; Jiang, 2017; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). Adaptability might increase an employee's chance of voluntarily leaving an exhaustive, non-rewarding work environment (Green, Dishop, & Aarons, 2016).

*Connectedness.* The connectedness scale provided information about the participants' integration into social support networks and the community. An example of an item on the connectedness scale was "I am cared for and loved" (Copeland et al., 2010). Connectedness was set forth as a major proponent of resilience as healthy relationships could act as a buffer for individuals during difficult seasons of life (Denz-Penhey & Murdoch, 2008).

*Conscientiousness.* Conscientiousness was deemed a personality factor in the Big Five personality theory (McCrae & Costa, 1999). The items on this subscale examined the level of participants' responsibility regarding their actions as well as their dependability. Research revealed individuals facing stress experienced less depressive



symptoms when they reported high levels of conscientiousness (Chen, Peng, Ma, & Dong, 2017).

***Emotional self-regulation.*** The emotional self-regulation subscale inquired about participants' ability to monitor, control, and effectively express emotions in appropriate manners. Hu, Wang, and Liu (2016) stated emotion regulation was "at the core of social stability" (p. 824). Emotional self-regulation could be predicted by maternal expression of positive and negative emotions. More specifically, increased amounts of positive emotion expression in mothers predicted amount of healthy emotion regulation techniques in their children (Hu et al., 2016). Other research revealed involvement in religious activities (e.g., attending a religious service) also predicted emotion regulation (Semplonius, Good, & Willoughby, 2015).

***Empathy.*** Empathy refers to an individual's ability to consider another's feelings during varying events including negative ones. It has been linked with satisfaction in romantic relationships (Schmidt & Gelhert, 2017), self-perceptions of social integration (Allemand, Steiger, & Fend, 2015), and an individual's ability to identify contributors to his/her meaning of life (Damiano, Ribeiro, Guedes dos Santos, da Silva, & Lucchetti, 2016).

***Initiative.*** Originally proposed as an integral step of Erikson's (1963, 1968, 1980) development, initiative has more recently been studied within the realm of resiliency and positive psychology. According to Erikson (1963), initiative "adds to autonomy the quality of undertaking, planning and 'attacking' a task" (p. 255). More recently, initiative has been widely studied with regard to resiliency. It was positively

associated with components of resilience such as persevering in order to experience self-growth (Sinclair & Oliver, 2003).

***Mindfulness.*** Mindfulness research and practice has exploded in recent years as its over-arching focus is on mind-body techniques to produce calming experiences (Shawyer, Enticott, Ozman, Inder, & Meadows, 2016). Practicing mindfulness has been linked with lowered anxiety, increased life satisfaction, and decreased anguish (Dijk et al., 2017; Roberts & Montgomery, 2016; Shi & MacBeth, 2017).

***Optimism.*** Optimism refers to hopeful attitudes and beliefs individuals hold about their current life situations and their futures (Kleiman et al., 2017). Optimism has been found to be negatively associated with psychopathologic symptoms including those characteristic of depression (McDonald, Shellman, Graham, & Harrison, 2016). Individuals with higher self-reported levels of optimism also reported better sleep quality, which has implications for overall mental health (Lau, Hui, Lam, & Cheung, 2017).

***Self-efficacy.*** Self-efficacy has often been referred to as the “I Think I Can” phenomenon (e.g., Bi, Dang, Li, Guo, & Zhang, 2016; Sawyer, 2017) as it refers to an individual’s perception of his/her ability to successfully complete a task. Self-efficacy has been found to be positively and significantly related to positive emotions and higher quality of sleep (Schutte & Malouff, 2016). In a different study, self-efficacy was found to be negatively correlated with work burn-out (Ventura, Salanova, & Llorens, 2015).

***Social competence.*** Social competence refers to variety of skills utilized in interpersonal situations including conflict management, assertiveness, and goal-directed behavior (Egeli & Rinaldi, 2016; Stichter, Christ, Herzog, O’Donnell, & O’Connor, 2016). In a study examining the ability of social competence in predicting parental

behaviors, researchers found social competence accounted for one-fourth of disciplinary styles (Egeli & Rinaldi, 2016).

For each JWS (Copeland et al. 2016) item, participants were presented with a 4-point Likert-type scale (e.g., 1 = *Not at all like me*, 4 = *Very much like me*). Higher scores reflected higher PWB. Scoring the JWS involved the calculation of total score and the optional 10 area scores. The 10 areas were not built using factor analytic studies (Bardos, personal communication, 2017); rather, they reflected the authors' attempt to represent the constructs identified in the positive psychology literature. Similar to other measures of psychological well-being (e.g., Ryff's [1989] Psychological Well-Being Scales, Assessment of Quality of Life--Richardson et al., 2014; Quality of Life Inventory--Frisch et al., 1992), the JWS conceptualized psychological well-being as a construct on a continuum. No cut-off scores regarding low or high psychological well-being have been put forth in the literature.

Leeper (2018) and Green (2018) examined the internal consistency of the JWS (Copeland et al. 2016) with undergraduate samples. Internal consistency with the sample in Leeper's study ranged from .70 (conscientiousness) to .95 (optimism). These values reflected the items under each dimension generally measured each respective dimension. Green examined the overall internal consistency and found a Cronbach's alpha of .96. Because there was limited research on the psychometric properties of the JWS, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated to examine the internal consistency for the specific sample on the JWS. Additionally, the stability of the JWS across two months was examined utilizing a correlation coefficient. These values are presented in Chapter IV.

**Couples Satisfaction Index.** The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI; Funk & Rogge, 2007) is a 16-item questionnaire that inquired about participants' level of content in either their current relationship or most previous research. The items were based on satisfaction (e.g., "My relationship with my partner makes me really happy") and communication between them and their partners (e.g., "I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually anything"). Items were presented on a 6-point Likert-type scale and the anchors assigned to each value on the scale changed throughout the scale (0 = *Not at all true*, 1 = *A little true*, 2 = *Somewhat true*, 3 = *Mostly true*, 4 = *Almost completely true*, 5 = *Completely true*). The values assigned to each of the anchors change periodically throughout the scale (see Appendix B for the complete scale and values). Scoring the CSI items produced a total score between 0-102 (Funk & Rogge, 2007) where higher scores reflected higher satisfaction levels.

Funk and Rogge (2007) also measured psychometric properties including levels of reliability and validity. With their sample, Funk and Rogge found the CSI had strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .98). Further, these researchers examined the convergent validity of the CSI by comparing its scores to scores of measures claiming to measure relationship satisfaction. For example, a source of evidence for convergent validity was obtained using the Eros subscale of the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Overall, the LAS asked questions about six different love styles including passionate love, game-playing love, pragmatic love, mania love, friendship love, and self-less love. Data analyses between the CSI and the Passionate Love subscale revealed a positive correlation--those who were sexually attracted to and

sexually intimate with their partners were more satisfied with their relationships (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

**Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised.** The current study sought to understand the role emotional expression played in romantic relationships. A search through the current literature revealed a limited number of measures existed for this purpose. For example, the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (Schaefer & Olson, 1981) examined perceptions of various forms of intimacy within romantic relationships. However, the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships only studied one area similar to the variables of interest in the current study--emotional intimacy. Thus, participants would be answering an unnecessarily high number of items. Another example was the Emotion Expression Index (Fischbach, Lichtenthaler, & Horstmann, 2015). While this instrument focused on emotion expression, its purpose was to examine gender stereotypes regarding emotion expression (Fischbach et al., 2015). Therefore, it did not adequately meet the needs of the current study.

The measure most relevant to meeting the needs of this study is called the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire (SEFQ; Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stifter, Parke, & Fox, 1995). Necessary editorial changes were made; however, the overall structure and themes were kept intact. These changes were reflected by adapting the name of the measure from the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire to the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised (SEFQ-R). The SEFQ-R is a 40-item survey that inquired about participants' expression in their family relationships. The SEFQ-R has two subscales--the negative emotions subscale and the positive emotions subscale--with 20 items on each subscale. A possible 80 points could be earned on each

subscale and a possible 160 points could be earned when the SEFQ-R total score was utilized. Higher total scores indicated higher levels of emotion expression.

The SEFQ-R was adapted for this study by changing the wording from referring to the participants' family to referring to the participants' romantic relationships. A complete list of the adaptations can be found in Table 1. Only items that were adapted are included in the table. The complete scale, as was utilized in this study, can be found in the Survey Packet included in Appendix B. Additionally, there was a slight adaptation to the original directions: the statement, "To answer the questionnaire, try to think of how frequently you express yourself during each of the following situations with a family member" (Halberstadt et al., 1995, p. 95) was changed to, "To answer the questionnaire, try to think of how frequently you express yourself during each of the following situations with your partner."

The original SEFQ had excellent psychometric properties. Halberstadt et al. (1995) examined the internal consistency of the positive scale, negative scale, and total scales across three developmental periods. The SEFQ scores of parents of infants ranged from .92 (negative subscale) to .94 (positive subscale). When parents of kindergarten and first graders completed the SEFQ, the Cronbach's alpha was .94 for the positive scale, .92 for the negative scale, and .93 overall. Similar Cronbach's alphas were found for parents of elementary school students, with .92, .85, and .89 found for the positive, negative, and total scores, respectively. The SEFQ-R produced three scores: positive expressiveness (SEFQ-R-PE), negative expressiveness (SEFQ-R-NE), and a total score (SEFQ-R-TS). Items that loaded onto the SEFQ-R-PE and SEFQ-R-NE are provided in Table 1. The SEFQ-R-TS provided information on the amount of positive and negative emotion an

individual expressed. The SEFQ-R-TS was the mediator between emotion-dismissing variable and emotion-coaching variables of parental meta-emotion philosophy and relationship satisfaction. In the path model, these are paths 'e' and 'f,' respectively. Likewise, the SEFQ-R-TS score was the mediator between the emotion-coaching category of parental meta-emotion philosophy and relationship satisfaction variable. These paths are labelled as 'b' and 'f' in the path model.

Table 1

*Adaptations to the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire*

Original Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire (SEFQ)	SEFQ-Revised (SEFQ-R)
1. Showing forgiveness to someone who broke a favorite possession.*	1. Showing forgiveness to my partner when they accidentally break a favorite possession.
2. Thanking family members for something they have done.*	2. Thanking my partner for something they have done.
4. Showing contempt for another's actions. **	4. Showing negative emotions for my partner's actions.
5. Expressing dissatisfaction with someone else's behavior. **	5. Expressing dissatisfaction with my partner's behavior.
6. Praising someone for good work. *	6. Praising my partner for good work.
7. Expressing anger at someone else's carelessness. **	7. Expressing anger at my partner's carelessness.
8. Sulking over unfair treatment by a family member. **	8. Griping over unfair treatment by my partner.
9. Blaming one another for family troubles. **	9. Blaming my partner for relationship troubles.
11. Putting down other people's interests. **	11. Putting down my partner's interests.
12. Showing dislike for someone.**	12. Showing dislike for my partner's characteristics or behavior.
21. Telling someone how nice they look.*	21. Telling each other how nice we look.
22. Expressing sympathy for someone's troubles. *	22. Expressing sympathy for my partner's troubles.
23. Expressing deep affection or love for someone. *	23. Expressing deep affection or love for my partner
24. Quarreling with a family member. *	24. Quarreling with my partner.
25. Crying when a loved one goes away. **	25. Crying when my partner goes away.
26. Spontaneously hugging a family member *	26. Spontaneously hugging my partner.
28. Expressing concern for the success of family members. *	28. Expressing concern for the success of my partner.
30. Offering to do somebody a favor.*	30. Offering to do my partner a favor.
31. Snuggling up to a family member. *	31. Snuggling up to my partner.
33. Trying to cheer up someone who is sad. *	33. Trying to cheer up my partner when they are sad.
34. Telling a family member how hurt you are. **	34. Telling your partner how hurt you are.
35. Telling family members how happy you are. *	35. Telling your partner how happy you are.
36. Threatening someone. **	36. Threatening your partner.
37. Criticizing someone for being late. **	37. Criticizing your partner for being late.
38. Expressing gratitude for a favor. *	38. Expressing gratitude for a favor.
39. Surprising someone with a little gift or favor. *	39. Surprising your partner with a little gift or favor.

Note. \* = Positive emotional expression. \*\* = Negative emotional expression



### **Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire.**

The Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression (PPREEQ) is a 14-item instrument that measures parental meta-emotion philosophy and was adapted from the Maternal Emotion Socialization Questionnaire (MESQ) by Lagacé-Séguin and Coplan (2005). Participants were required to answer each question on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

Because the original MESQ (Lagacé-Séguin & Coplan, 2005) was intended to be completed by maternal caregivers with regard to current day parenting, it was slightly modified. Because the current study asked participants about their retrospective perceptions of their parents' meta-emotion philosophy, the points of view and tense of the questions were changed. Additionally, the original MESQ only inquired about how an individual's mother perceived and responded to emotional expression. To make the scale appropriate for the current study, the questions were also changed from asking about an individual's mother to asking about their caregivers. A complete list of adaptations is provided in Table 2. To reflect these changes, the measure is referred to as the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression (PPREEQ).

Table 2

*Changes from the Original Maternal Emotion Socialization Questionnaire to the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression*

Original MESQ	PPREEQ
1. When my child is sad, it's time to problem-solve. **	1. When I was sad, my parents helped me problem-solve **
2. Anger is an emotion worth exploring. **	2. My parents helped me explore anger. **
3. When my child is sad, I am expected to fix the world and make it perfect.*	3. When I was sad, my parents were expected to fix the world and make it perfect.*
4. When my child gets sad, it's time to get close. **	4. When I was sad, my parents used it as an opportunity to get close. **
5. Sadness is something that one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on. *	5. My parents' thought that sadness is something that one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on. *
6. I prefer a happy child to a child who is overly emotional. *	6. My parents preferred a happy child to a child who is overly emotional. *
7. I help my child get over sadness quickly so he/she can move on to other things. *	7. My parents helped me get over sadness quickly so I could move on to other things.*
8. When my child is angry, it's an opportunity for getting close. **	8. My parents used my experiences with anger as opportunities to bond with me. **
9. When my child is angry, I take some time to try to experience this feeling with my child. **	9. When I was angry, my parents took the time to try and experience the feeling with me. **
10. I try to change my child's angry moods into cheerful ones. *	10. My parents tried to changed my angry moods into cheerful ones. *
11. Childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.*	11. My parents felt that childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.*
12. When my child gets angry my goal is to get him/her to stop. *	12. My parents tried to get me to stop me from getting angry. *
13. When my child is angry I want to know what he/she is thinking. **	13. My parents tried to know what I was thinking whenever I was angry. **
14. When my child is angry, it's time to solve a problem. **	14. When I was angry, my parents helped me solve the problem. **

*Note.* \* = Emotionally-dismissive items; \*\* = Emotion-coaching items

The scoring of PPREEQ produced two subscale scores: an emotion-coaching score and an emotionally-dismissive score (Lagace-Seguin & Coplan, 2005). As stated in Chapter II, emotion-coaching refers to parents working through difficult emotions with their children and allowing a safe space for appropriate expressions of emotions. Emotionally-dismissive behaviors refer to parents' negatively perceiving and reacting to their children's expressions of emotions. These constructs are considered theoretically opposite and research has displayed insignificant, negative correlations between the two

(Lunkenheimer, Shields, & Cortina, 2007). Correlations between the emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive variables were calculated in the current study. These results are presented in Chapter IV.

**Demographic survey.** Participants' age, year in school, relationship status, ethnicity, marital status, educational level of the caregivers who raised them during childhood and adolescence, number of sibling(s), a rating of relationship with their sibling(s), and town and state of residence before coming to college were gathered. Information regarding who raised participants when they were younger was gathered to exclude those who were raised by individuals other than parents, step-parents, or grandparents. Finally, the number of siblings and the rating of the current relationship with their siblings were collected to understand each participant's sources of potential social support.

#### **Step 4: Model Estimation**

The dataset was exported from SPSS to R to complete the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and estimate the structural models (Core Team, 2013). The specific estimation method, a "full-information method" called maximum likelihood estimation, utilized an iterative process in which R attempted to improve the fit of the model to the data (Kline, 2005, p. 112). The decision to utilize maximum likelihood estimation was based on its ability to estimate models using ordinal data as well as its leniency with slightly non-normal data (Williams, 2015).

**Factor analysis.** The model estimation was also influenced by a series of exploratory factor analyses and confirmatory factor analyses. Exploratory factor analysis with principal components analysis extraction method was followed by direct oblimin

rotation method when more than one component was extracted. The decision to utilize a principal components analysis was based on its description as “the most robust method” (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2009, p. 378).

Further, a function of principal components analysis is to decrease the number of variables within a scale or within an overall model (Jolliffe, 2002). This was especially important for the current study as (a) numerous editorial changes were made to two of the original instruments (e.g., MESQ, SEFQ) and (b) the number of items in some cases could reduce the indicators that could serve as parameters when testing the study’s research models (Kline, 2005; Matsunaga, 2008). This approach allowed for the recommended three indicators per variable (Kenny, 2015; Kline, 2005; Matsunaga, 2008). The use of at least three indicators, instead of utilizing composite scores from the instruments, allowed the model to be justified. When the data were exported from SPSS into R and structural equation modeling analyses were conducted, R computed a CFA as part of the analyses. The original CFA utilized the findings from the current study’s factor analysis.

**Fit indices.** Fit indices were assessed to determine how well the measurement and structural models fit the data. Although several cutoff scores for fit indices were present in the literature, those proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) were utilized. Those cutoff scores are summarized in Table 3. Additionally, Iacobucci (2010) provided general information regarding manners in which fit indices react with sample and model characteristics. For example, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) often “over-rejects” models when the sample is relatively small (Iacobucci, 2010, p. 96). Because the current models had a small sample size, the RMSEA was interpreted with

caution. As the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was not sensitive to small sample size nor complex models, it was given more validity (Iacobucci, 2010; Kenny, 2015). The comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) are two other indices not influenced by sample size. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on the SRMR, CFI, and TLI. The fit indices for each of the models are presented below and within each model's respective discussion.

Table 3

*Cut-Off Scores for Fit Indices Needed for Model Fit*

Fit Index	Cut-Off Scores
TLI	$\geq .95$
CFI	$\geq .95$
RMSEA	$\leq .08$
SRMR	$\leq .06^*$

*Note.* TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. CFI = Comparative Fit Index. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Residual. \* = Appropriate Cut-off when RMSEA is  $\leq .05$ .

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationships among parental meta-emotion philosophy, emotion expression, relationship satisfaction, and psychological well-being (PWB). The chapter begins by describing (a) data collection, screening, and cleaning; (b) a discussion of the descriptive statistics (e.g., participant demographics, instrumentation characteristics); (c) an examination of the instruments' psychometric properties; and (d) a presentation of the statistical analyses performed to address the study's research questions.

#### **Data Screening**

Before data analysis, the data were screened for potential coding errors and decision-making regarding missing data. The characteristics of the data (e.g. values, ranges) were first examined. This step ensured the appropriate values were assigned to each response and the data were correctly imported into the statistical software. An examination into these characteristics revealed participants' responses fell within the appropriate range of potential scores on each measure. The data were then examined for missing data. When missing data existed, the participants tended to only answer the first or second questions. Additionally, six participants took the study two times with varying answers each time. Each participant's first response was utilized and the second response

was deleted. Steps taken to prevent this from occurring further are described in the procedures section.

Following data cleaning, the data were assessed for characteristics specifically required for structural equation modeling (SEM). Screening data for structural equation modeling included the examination of the data for outliers, univariate and multivariate normality, and multicollinearity.

### **Outliers**

To inspect for univariate outliers, all participants' ages were transformed into  $z$ -scores and standard deviations from the mean were examined. Data from 10 participants were 2.5 standard deviations away from the mean, indicating they were outliers. These ages ranged from 27 to 41 years of age. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), scores that deviate from the mean by 2.5 standard deviations are considered outliers. Because the current study was interested in various experiences most reflective of undergraduate students, the decision was made to delete outliers based on age. The mean age of participants was 19.64 ( $SD = 1.452$ ) with a range in ages from 18 to 26 years. Additional participant demographics are summarized in Table 4. In addition to age, the data were checked for univariate outliers on the measures. On the Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007), data from one participant were more than 2.5 standard deviations away from the mean. Therefore, the data from this participant was deleted.

Participants' scores on each measure were also assessed for multivariate outliers utilizing Mahalanobis distance. All participants' responses were within 2.5 standard

deviations of the mean. Using an alpha level of  $p < .01$  level, there were no observed multivariate outliers, resulting in a final sample size of 167 participants.

Table 4

*Participant Demographic Information*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	28	16.8
Female	138	82.6
Other	1	0.6
Age		
18	41	24.6
19	46	27.5
20	37	22.2
21	26	15.6
22	10	6.0
23	4	2.4
24	1	0.6
25	1	0.6
26	1	0.6
Year in College		
Freshmen	68	40.7
Sophomore	39	23.4
Junior	41	24.6
Senior	19	11.4
Race/Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	128	76.6
Hispanic	18	10.8
Multi-racial	12	7.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	2.4
Native/Aboriginal	2	1.2
African American/Black	1	.6
Other	2	1.2
Relationship Status		
Single	49	29.3
In a Relationship	118	70.7
Geographical Location		
Did Not Move to College	29	17.4
Moved to College	138	82.6

$N = 167$



**Normality**

The data were checked for univariate and multivariate normality. Skewness and kurtosis values were interpreted for assessing univariate normality. Levels of skewness statistics being greater than -1 and kurtosis statistics between -1 and 2, all data were considered normal.

**Multicollinearity**

The data were checked for multicollinearity, which is another assumption of SEM. According to Brace et al. (2009), the term multicollinearity refers to a high correlation between the variables in the model. The variance inflation factor (VIF) levels were examined and met the most conservative level presented in the literature ( $VIF < 4$ ; O'Brien, 2007), suggesting the multicollinearity assumption was not violated (Kline, 2005). Another indicator that multicollinearity was not problematic was the measurement and structural models covariances. These covariances, along with the significance level and corresponding standardized values, are provided in the discussion of each respective model.

In addition to the general SEM assumptions previously mentioned, Kline (2005) suggested four assumptions for maximum likelihood estimation. These assumptions required that there were no missing values, the observations were independent as were the exogeneous variables and their disturbances, and the model was correctly specified. The data were previously screened for missing values, which indicated this assumption was met. The second of these assumptions stated the observations must be independent of each other. Because the study design was cross-sectional and data analyzed for the structural equation modeling were collected at one point in time, the data met this

assumption. The two remaining assumptions, independence of exogenous variables and correct model specification, were examined after the models were estimated. The independence of the exogeneous variables (e.g. emotion-coaching, emotionally-dismissive) were examined by utilizing a Pearson correlation coefficient. These two variables were not significantly correlated ( $r = -.15$ ); therefore, this assumption was met.

A final set of assumptions needed to be assessed due to the causal nature of structural equation modeling. Kline (2012) outlined five conditions needed to establish causality among variables: (a) temporal precedence, (b) a correlation between the variables of interest, (c) a lack of extraneous variables accounting for the correlation between the variables, (d) “the form of the distribution is known,” and (e) the directionality between the variables is presented in the accurate order (p. 113). However, in several publications, Kline (2005, 2012) recognized that proving temporal precedence was impossible in studies with a singular data collection time point. Therefore, Kline called for strong theoretical support regarding SEM decisions such as model specification and directionality. Further, directionality between latent variables generally followed a developmental approach. These two areas are discussed further in detail in the model specification section in this chapter.

### **Data Transformations**

The data were kept in their raw form for research questions that pertained to the following structural equation modeling questions:

- Q1.1 Does the parental meta-emotion philosophy of participants' caregivers predict satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?

Q1.2 Does emotion expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?

Q2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and psychological well-being?

Q2.1 Does the parental meta-emotion philosophy of participants' caregivers predict satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?

The data were transformed into *T*-scores for the following research questions:

Q1 What is the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy, emotion expression in relationships, and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?

Q3 What is the stability of participants' reported psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction about two months later for those in different reported relationship statuses?

### **Psychometric Properties**

Before establishing the psychometric properties of the instruments, the factor structure of each instrument was examined. Following this analysis, their internal consistency with the current sample and test-retest reliability were examined. As previously mentioned in Chapter III, the underlying factor structure of the study's measures was examined utilizing exploratory factor analysis with principal components analysis extraction method followed by direct oblimin rotation method when more than one component was extracted. The decision to utilize a principal components analysis was based on the fact that was "the most robust method" (Brace et al., 2009, p. 378). Further, a function of principal components analysis is to decrease the number of variables within a scale or within an overall model (Joliffe, 2002). This was especially important for the current study as (a) numerous editorial changes were made to the original instruments and (b) the number of items in some cases could reduce the

indicators that served as parameters when testing the study's research models (Kline, 2005; Matsunaga, 2008). This approach allowed for the recommended three indicators per variable (Kenny, 2015; Kline, 2005; Matsunaga, 2008). The use of at least three indicators per instrument, instead of utilizing composite scores from the instruments, allowed them to be included when testing the structural models.

In all cases, prior to interpreting the results of the principal components analyses, two assumptions were examined--the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy followed by the Barlett's test of sphericity. All instruments exceeded the recommended .60 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin threshold and the Bartlett's tests of sphericity were significant at the  $p < .01$  (Brace et al., 2009). Previous research and theoretical underpinnings of each instrument, in addition to component loadings and internal consistency levels, guided decisions to delete or maintain items from their original subscales.

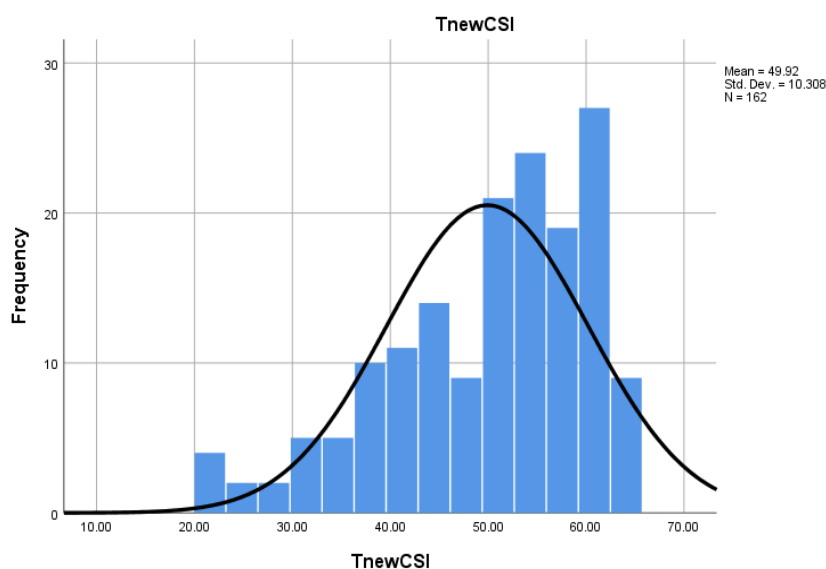
### **Couples Satisfaction Index**

**Descriptive statistics.** The CSI (Funk & Rogge, 2007) assessed participants' romantic relationship satisfaction. Sixteen items comprised this measure (see Appendix B). Each item was rated on a 6-point Likert scale: 1 = *Not at All*, 2 = *A Little*, 3 = *Somewhat*, 4 = *Mostly*, 5 = *Almost Completely*, and 6 = *Completely*. Higher scores on the CSI reflected higher levels of relationship satisfaction. The mean scores of the first and second data collections as expressed in *T*-scores are presented in Table 5 while the distribution the first round of CSI scores is displayed in Figure 4. It appeared from this histogram that the CSI data were slightly negatively skewed; however, the skewness and kurtosis values indicated the data were within the acceptable range. Moreover, the model estimation utilized in this study was not sensitive to small deviations from normality.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for First and Second Data Collection: Couples Satisfaction Index Raw Mean Scores*

Data Collection Time	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
First	74.23	15.57	31.00	96.00
Second	72.98	16.51	23.00	96.00



*Figure 4.* Distribution of the first data collection Couples Satisfaction Index *T*-scores.

The CSI test-retest reliability was also examined across two months. The CSI mean *T*-score for the first data collection was 49.87 ( $SD = 10.20$ ) and was slightly higher, 50.12 ( $SD = 10.07$ ), for the second data collection. These data are summarized in Table 6. The distribution of scores from each of the data collection time periods appeared to be similar.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for First and Second Data Collection: Couples Satisfaction Index T-Score Mean Scores*

Data Collection Time	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
First	49.87	10.20	21.57	64.12
Second	50.12	10.07	20.00	64.00

The internal consistency of this sample's scores on the CSI was calculated across data collection times. The Cronbach's alpha produced for the first data time point was .96, while the Cronbach's alpha for the second data time point was .97.

**Factor analysis of the Couples Satisfaction Index.** An exploratory factor analysis had not previously been conducted on the current version of the CSI. Results from the current exploratory factor analysis on the CSI indicated the CSI was a one-factor measure as evidenced by one eigenvalue of over the value of 1.00. The total variance of relationship satisfaction accounted for by the one component was 66.13%. Component loadings of each item on the overall CSI component are presented in Table 7. Therefore, all items were maintained in the structural equation modeling analysis. Given the CSI had 16 items and utilizing an item-as-indicator approach would increase measurement error and make the model more complex, the CSI items were randomly assigned into three parcels. In doing so, the recommended number of three indicators was utilized, the measurement error was controlled, and the model was kept less complex (e.g., Kline, 2005).

Table 7

*Component Loadings for the Couples Satisfaction Index*

Items	Component Loadings
1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, regarding your current relationship.	.78
2. In general, how often you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	.78
3. Our relationship is strong.	.87
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.	.83
5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner.	.83
6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner.	.83
7. How rewarding if your relationship with your partner?	.86
8. How well does your partner meet your needs?	.83
9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	.71
10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	.91
11. Boring/Interesting*	.41
12. Bad/Good*	.86
13. Discouraging/Hopeful*	.80
14. Enjoyable/Miserable*	.83
15. Full/Empty*	.90
16. Sturdy/Fragile*	.89

*Note.* \* = The prompt for questions 11-16 was “Please answer the following questions by circling the number that most pertains to your relationship.”

### **Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire**

**Descriptive statistics.** Because the emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive meta-emotion categories were treated as two variables, descriptive statistics on these variables were ran separately. The number of emotion-coaching items was seven, while the number of emotionally-dismissive items was four. As displayed in Table 8, the mean score for the emotion-coaching variable was 22.63 ( $SD = 5.76$ ). The mean score for the emotionally-dismissive variable was 13.55 ( $SD = 2.70$ ). The T-score equivalents of these descriptive statistics are provided in Table 9. Overall, it appeared the

current sample perceived a higher amount of emotion-coaching from their parents during childhood. Psychometrically, the internal consistency of the PPREEQ emotion-coaching ( $\alpha = .86$ ) subscale was slightly higher than the internal consistency of the overall PPREEQ ( $\alpha = .80$ ). With the current sample, the internal consistency of the emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was .62. It is possible the low internal consistency of the emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy subscale occurred due to two reasons. First, it was possible the small number of items on the subscale lowered the internal consistency. Secondly, it was possible the items on this subscale measured different constructs. This is addressed in the Limitations section of this paper.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy Variables Raw Scores*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Emotion-Coaching	22.63	5.76	7.00	35.00
Emotionally-Dismissive	13.55	2.70	6.00	20.00

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics for Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy Variables T-Scores*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Emotion-Coaching	50.00	10.00	22.85	71.66
Emotionally-Dismissive	49.69	10.05	21.53	73.37



### **Factor structure of the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion**

**Expression Questionnaire.** Lagacé-Séguin and Coplan (2005) previously explored the factor analysis of the original MESQ, which was the original version of the PPREEQ utilized in the current study. Lagacé-Séguin and Coplan found it to be a two-factor instrument. As reflected by the measure, seven of the items loaded onto an emotion-coaching subscale and the remaining seven loaded onto the emotion-dismissive subscale. The variance accounted for by the emotionally-dismissive subscale was 37.1% (Eigenvalue = 5.2) and 30.10% was accounted for by the emotion-coaching subscale (Eigenvalue = 4.2). To examine how these two factors reacted with the current sample, two components were forced in a principal components analysis. When two components were forced, the measure failed to produce the same even-numbered factor structure of the original factor analysis. Whereas previous studies have found the emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive components to have seven items each, the current study found 10 items on the emotion-coaching component and four items on the emotionally-dismissive component. The first component accounted for 36.08% of the variance (Eigenvalue = 5.05), while the second component accounted for 14.39 (Eigenvalue = 2.01). It was possible the difference in findings could be attributed to the adaptations and use of the scale (e.g., personal perceptions versus perceptions of another's internal beliefs).

Although the component loadings suggested three of the proposed emotionally-dismissive items loaded onto the emotion-coaching scale, theoretical underpinnings suggested these items belonged closer to an emotionally-dismissive construct. Therefore, second and third principal components analyses were conducted without the enforcement

of two factors. This time, the emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive subscales were examined separately.

**Emotion-coaching subscale.** The exploratory factor analysis with principal components analysis extracted one component from the emotion-coaching items. This component accounted for 57.64% (Eigenvalue = 4.04; see Figure 5 for scree plot). The component loadings were generally strong and ranged from .67 to .86 (see Table 10). When the CFA was conducted within R, the modification indices reflected a poor fit of the model to the data. This was possibly due to the complexity of the model combined with a relatively small sample size. In efforts to mitigate this issue, the number of emotion-coaching indicators decreased from seven to three. Therefore, the seven items were randomly assigned across three parcels.

Table 10

*Component Matrix for the Emotion-Coaching Subscale*

Items	Component 1
1.) When I was sad, my parents helped me problem-solve.	.74
2.) My parents helped me explore anger.	.79
3.) When I was sad, my parents used it as an opportunity to get close.	.67
4.) My parents used my experiences with anger as opportunities to bond with me.	.74
5.) When I was angry, my parents took the time to try and experience the feeling with me.	.77
6.) My parents tried to know what I was thinking whenever I was angry.	.73
7.) When I was angry, my parents helped me solve the problem.	.86



Figure 5. Scree plot from the principal components analysis of the Emotion Coaching subscale.

**Emotionally-dismissive subscale.** Two components were extracted from the initial principal components analysis. The first component had an eigenvalue of 2.0 and accounted for 28.71% of the variance, while the second component's eigenvalue was 1.69 and accounted for 24.13% of the variance. An examination of the pattern matrix (see Table 11) revealed overall strong loadings on both components. Three of the strongest loadings on the second component were negative, which indicated these items were inversely related with the overall component. There are several possible explanations for these unexpected findings. For example, items two, three, and six related to participants' thoughts and feelings. It is possible participants felt unsure how to answer these questions, given the implicit nature of thoughts and feelings. Further,

item one ('When I was sad, my parents were expected to fix the world and make it perfect'), it was unclear if the pressure to "fix the world and make it perfect" came from the participants themselves or their parents. Because this item in particular failed to meet the .30 cutoff point, it was deleted. A second principal component analysis was conducted and its findings are presented below.

Table 11

*Pattern Matrix for the Emotionally-Dismissive Subscale*

Item	Component 1	Component 2
1. When I was sad, my parents were expected to fix the world and make it perfect.	-.19	.52
2. My parents thought that sadness is something that one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	.60	-.06
3. My parents preferred a happy child to a child who was overly emotional.	.73	-.35
4. My parents helped me get over my sadness quickly so I could move on to other things.	.11	.75
5. My parents tried changing my angry moods into cheerful ones.	.13	.83
6. My parents felt that childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	.72	.11
7. My parents tried to stop me from getting angry.	.66	.36

The second principal component analysis revealed the extraction of two components (see Table 12). Similar to the first analysis, the components lacked a clear divide between items that inquired about sadness and anger. Item one was negatively correlated to component one, while items four and five had loadings less than .30. In efforts to obtain the simplest structure, a final principal components analysis was run

without items one, four, and five. The results indicated one component was extracted (Eigenvalue = 1.87). The scree plot is presented in Figure 6. This solution was the simplest structure produced. The updated four-item emotionally-dismissive subscale produced an increased, though still low, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .62$ ).

Table 12

*Updated Emotionally-Dismissive Component Matrix*

Item	Component Loading
1.) My parents thought that sadness is something that one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	.59
2.) My parents preferred a happy child to a child who was overly emotional.	.70
3.) My parents felt that childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	.75
4.) My parents tried to stop me from getting angry.	.69

Similar to the emotion-coaching subscale, parceling was also utilized with the emotionally-dismissive subscale. To reduce the complexity of the overall measurement model, the approach of indicators changed from an item-as-indicator to item parceling. Given there were four items, two of the parcels included one item and one parcel included two items.

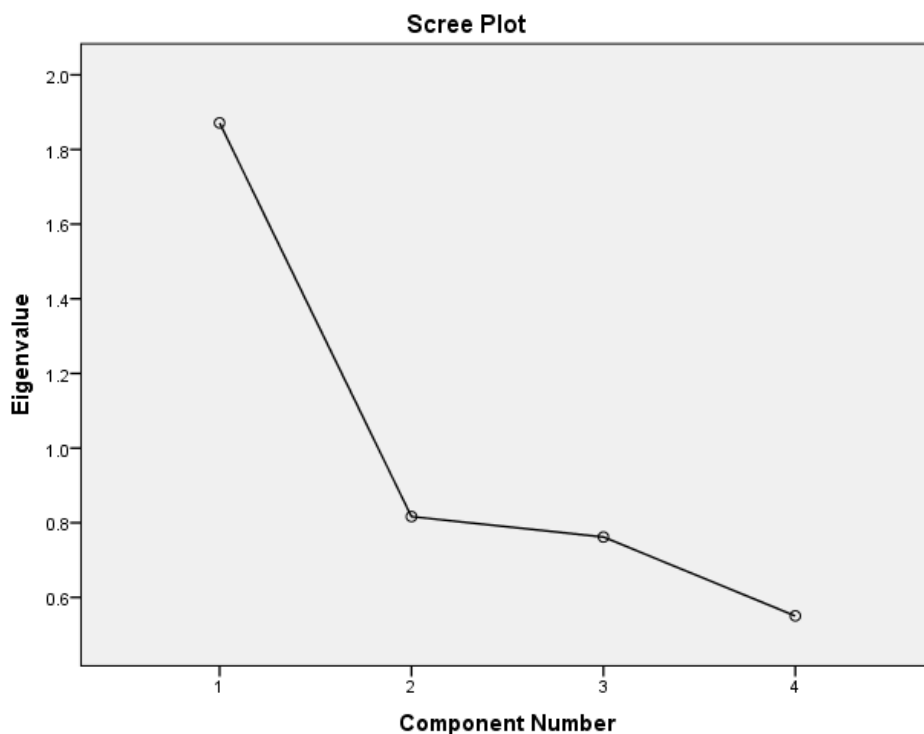
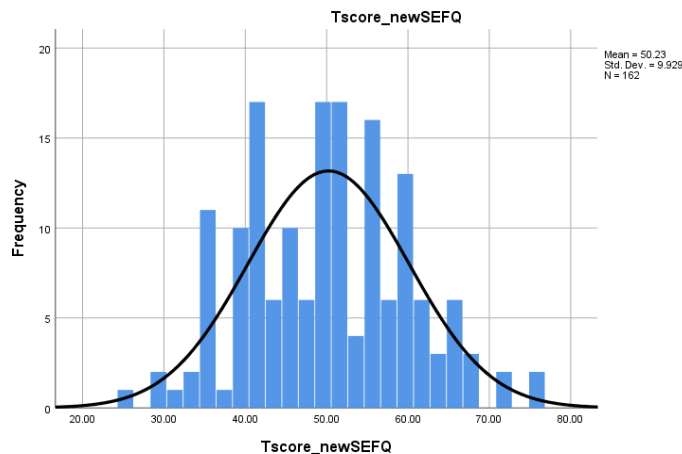


Figure 6. Scree plot from the principal components analysis of the Emotionally-Dismissive subscale.

### Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised

**Descriptive statistics.** For the current study, the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire (SEFQ; Halberstadt et al., 1995) was revised to assess emotion expression within young adult romantic relationships; therefore, it is called the SEFQ-Revised. Each of the 40 items was presented on a 4-point Likert scale with the following options: 1 = *Rarely*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Often*, and 4 = *Always*. There were 160 points possible with higher scores indicating higher levels of overall emotion expression. The raw mean of the sample was 89.67 ( $SD = 9.81$ ). The scores ranged from 65 to 115. When transformed into  $T$ -scores, the mean was 50.21 ( $SD = 9.93$ ) and values ranged from 25.27 to 75.86.



*Figure 7.* The distribution of the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised *T*-scores.

The internal consistency of the SEFQ-R Total Score in the current study was found to be within the acceptable range ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The Cronbach's alpha of the SEFQ-R Positive Emotions subscale was slightly higher ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and the internal consistency of the SEFQ-R Negative Emotions subscale was slightly lower ( $\alpha = .79$ ). These values were slightly lower than the ranges of Cronbach's alpha values reported by Halberstadt et al. (1995). In their four studies, Halberstadt and colleagues found internal alpha ranges for the positive subscale, negative subscale, and total score to be .90-.94, .82-.92, and .87-.93, respectively. It was possible these deviations were results of participant characteristics. Mothers ages 22 to 45 years of age completed the survey in the study by Halberstadt and colleagues while the majority of the participants in the current study were younger ( $M = 19.66$  years;  $SD = 1.62$ ).

**Factor structure.** In its original form, the SEFQ included two components (Halberstadt et al., 1995)--one component included the positive emotion expression items while the second component included the negative emotion expression items. To cross

validate the SEFQ-R two-component structure, an exploratory factor analysis with two forced components was conducted. The results were similar to research conducted at the inception of the original SEFQ (Halberstadt et al., 1995). The two components extracted (see Table 13) generally reflected positive emotion expression and negative emotion expression. Two of the items that failed to meet a .30 cutoff in the original research on the SEFQ also failed to meet the same cutoff in the current study: “Showing contempt for my partner’s action” and “Apologizing for being late.” Additionally, two of the proposed positive emotion expression items (“Seeking approval for an action” and “Expressing concern for the success of my partner”) correlated higher with the negative emotion expression component. The latter of these performed similarly in research conducted by Halberstadt et al. (1995). One of the proposed negative emotion expression items (“Expressing sorrow about the death of my partner's or my pet dying”) correlated higher on the positive emotion expression component. This was also an item that was reported to behave in the same way in prior research (Halberstadt et al., 1995).

The current study initially followed the original measure’s authors’ recommendations as well as the practice of several other studies to separate the SEFQ-R into positive emotion expression and negative emotion expression subscales (Camras, Kolmodin, & Chen, 2008; Edwards, 2014; Halberstadt et al., 1995; Hu et al., 2016). The model was re-specified from this format due to the model’s failure to converge. Therefore, for subsequent measurement models, positive and negative emotion expression were combined into one emotion expression variable.



Table 13

*Component Loadings of the Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised*

Self-Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire-Revised Items	1	2
1.) Showing forgiveness to my partner when they break a favorite possession.	<b>.53</b>	-.16
2.) Thanking my partner for something they have done.	<b>.55</b>	-.16
3.) Exclaiming over a beautiful day.	<b>.33</b>	-.08
4.) Showing contempt for my partner's actions.	-.07	.21
5.) Expressing dissatisfaction with my partner's behavior.	-.17	<b>.64</b>
6.) Praising my partner for good work.	<b>.65</b>	-.14
7.) Expressing anger at my partner's carelessness.	-.23	<b>.69</b>
8.) Sulking over unfair treatment by my partner.	-.22	<b>.67</b>
9.) Blaming my partner for relationship troubles.	-.21	<b>.55</b>
10.) Crying after an unpleasant disagreement.	.15	<b>.51</b>
11.) Putting down my partner's interest.	-.20	<b>.43</b>
12.) Showing dislike for my partner's characteristics or behavior.	-.08	<b>.58</b>
13.) Seeking approval for an action.	.21	<b>.35</b>
14.) Expressing embarrassment over a stupid mistake.	.23	<b>.37</b>
15.) Going to pieces when tension builds up.	.04	<b>.55</b>
16.) Expressing exhilaration after an unexpected triumph.	<b>.36</b>	.21
17.) Expressing excitement over one's future plans.	<b>.56</b>	.14
18.) Demonstrating admiration.	<b>.67</b>	.02
19.) Expressing sorrow about the death of my partner's or my pet dying.	<b>.43</b>	.19
20.) Expressing disappointment over something that didn't work out.	.20	<b>.37</b>
21.) Telling each other how nice we look.	<b>.67</b>	-.14
22.) Expressing sympathy for my partner's troubles.	<b>.65</b>	.05
23.) Expressing deep affection or love for my partner.	<b>.64</b>	-.02
24.) Quarreling with my partner.	-.20	<b>.48</b>
25.) Crying when my partner goes away.	.23	<b>.31</b>
26.) Spontaneously hugging my partner.	<b>.51</b>	.05
27.) Expressing momentary anger over a trivial irritation.	.04	<b>.56</b>
28.) Expressing concern for the success of my partner.	.14	<b>.38</b>
29.) Apologizing for being late.	.28	.09
30.) Offering to do my partner a favor.	<b>.64</b>	-.09
31.) Snuggling up to my partner.	<b>.71</b>	.05
32.) Showing how upset you are after a bad day	.17	<b>.44</b>
33.) Trying to cheer up my partner when they are sad.	<b>.65</b>	-.02
34.) Telling your partner how hurt you are.	.18	<b>.50</b>
35.) Telling your partner how happy you are.	<b>.56</b>	.09
36.) Threatening your partner.	-.07	<b>.32</b>
38.) Expressing gratitude for a favor.	<b>.69</b>	-.06
39.) Surprising your partner with a little gift or favor.	<b>.45</b>	.00
40.) Saying "I'm sorry" when you realize that you are wrong.	<b>.48</b>	-.20

*Note.* All factor loadings  $\geq .30$  are bolded

## The Journey to Wellness Scale

**Descriptive statistics.** The Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS; Copeland et al., 2016) was utilized to assess psychological well-being (PWB) in the current study. It presented participants with a 4-point Likert-type scale (e.g., 1 = *Not at all like me*, 4 = *Very much like me*). Higher scores on the JWS indicate higher levels of PWB. The overall mean total score for the current sample was 250.52 ( $SD = 21.91$ ). The means and standard deviations of each subscale for the first data collection are provided in Table 14 while the raw mean and standard deviations for both data collection points are summarized in Table 15. The means and standard deviations of each subscale following the transformation are also presented in Table 15. These were also the scores utilized for analyses pertaining to research questions 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1. Consistent with the other measures, the JWS data were transformed into *T*-scores before the analyses for research questions 2 and 3. The distribution of the JWS *T*-scores are presented in Figure 8.

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics of the First Data Collection Journey to Wellness Scale Raw Scores*

Journey to Wellness Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Adaptability	25.27	2.58	17.00	32.00
Connectedness	25.31	3.68	14.00	32.00
Conscientious	26.18	2.82	16.00	32.00
Emotion Self-Regulation	23.08	3.13	14.00	32.00
Empathy	27.17	2.69	17.00	32.00
Initiative	23.94	2.71	17.00	30.00
Mindfulness	24.90	2.84	17.00	32.00
Optimism	25.19	2.57	18.00	30.00
Self-Efficacy	26.38	2.77	17.00	32.00
Social Competence	26.19	2.69	18.00	32.00

Table 15

*Descriptive Statistics of the Journey to Wellness Scale*

Data Collection Time	Raw <i>M</i> ( <i>T</i> -Score)	Raw <i>SD</i> ( <i>T</i> -Score)	Raw Min ( <i>T</i> -Score)	Raw Max ( <i>T</i> -Score)
Time 1	250.52 50.07	21.91 10.03	173.00 14.20	309.00 77.16
Time 2	250.38 51.59	21.76 10.40	109.00 26.00	197.00 77.00

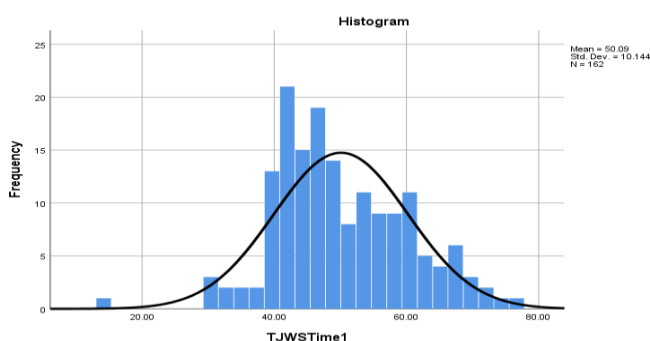


Figure 8. The distribution of first data collection Journey to Wellness Scale *T*-scores.

**Factor structure.** Given the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) included 80 items and the study's sample size was 167, an exploratory factor analysis was deemed inappropriate and not performed on the JWS. Instead, the 10 rationally derived constructs proposed by the JWS authors, as comprised by the original 80 items, were utilized in the analyses. The 10 subscales acted as indicators of the JWS in the analyses. The internal consistency coefficients were calculated for each subscale and the total JWS score (see Table 16).

As indicated in Table 16, the overall JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) internal consistency was excellent ( $\alpha = .94$ ). This indicated that as a whole, the instrument appeared to measure the same construct. However, the Cronbach's alpha values of the individual subscales were mostly insufficient. Although previous studies displayed

excellent internal consistency for each subscale (Green, 2018; Leeper, 2018), the Cronbach's alpha for the current sample indicated the Conscientiousness ( $\alpha = .50$ ), Optimism ( $\alpha = .62$ ), Initiative ( $\alpha = .63$ ), and Adaptability ( $\alpha = .65$ ) subscales were particularly insufficient.

Table 16

*Cronbach's Alpha for the 10 Proposed Subscales of the Journey to Wellness Scale*

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
Adaptability	.65
Initiative	.63
Social Competence	.70
Empathy	.79
Optimism	.62
Emotional Regulation	.73
Conscientiousness	.50
Mindfulness	.68
Self-Efficacy	.69
Connectedness	.73
JWS Total score	.94

These low levels of internal consistency indicated the items within each respective subscale might have measured different constructs, which was problematic given the items were grouped based on the area of PWB to which they rationally/

theoretically belonged according to scale authors. Chapter V provides a more in-depth description of internal consistency as a limitation.

Consistent with previous instruments, item parceling was utilized with the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016). In the initial measurement model, the 10 mean subscale scores served as indicators. However, the inclusion of 10 indicators for a single measure complicated the model. Therefore, the 10 subscales were grouped into three parcels. Whereas the parcels for the previous measures utilized random assignment of items to parcels, the JWS parceling included random assignment of complete subscales into parcels. The Adaptability, Connectedness, and Self-Efficacy subscales comprised one parcel while the Social Competence, Empathy, and Initiative subscales composed the second parcel. Finally, the Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Regulation, and Mindfulness subscales comprised the third parcel.

### **Measurement Models**

The results of the exploratory factor analysis were previously discussed within the discussion of each respective instrument. This section describes a series of re-specifications made based on the fit indices of each measurement model.

#### **Original Measurement Model**

The original measurement model utilized during the initial confirmatory factor analysis was based on the exploratory factor analysis. The number of indicators for the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016), CSI (Funk & Rogge, 2007), emotionally-dismissive subscale, and emotion-coaching subscale were 10, 3, 4, and 7, respectively (see Figure 9). Based upon the results of the current study's initial confirmatory factor analysis as well as recommendations provided by previous literature on the original version of the SEFQ-

R, the emotion expression variable was separated into positive emotion expression and negative emotion expression (Halberstadt et al., 1995). Therefore, the positive emotion expression items were randomly parceled onto two indicators while the negative emotion expression items were randomly parceled onto two additional indicators. Overall, the SEFQ-R had four indicators.

Based on the number of indicators utilized per measure, the original measurement model failed to meet acceptable levels of fit and failed to converge. Specifically, the standard error, beta coefficients, and standardized estimates were not produced. One potential reason why this model performed poorly during the confirmatory factor analysis was the complex nature of the model (e.g., high number of indicators) and relatively small sample (see Figure 9). Therefore, the model was re-specified to include a lower number of indicators.

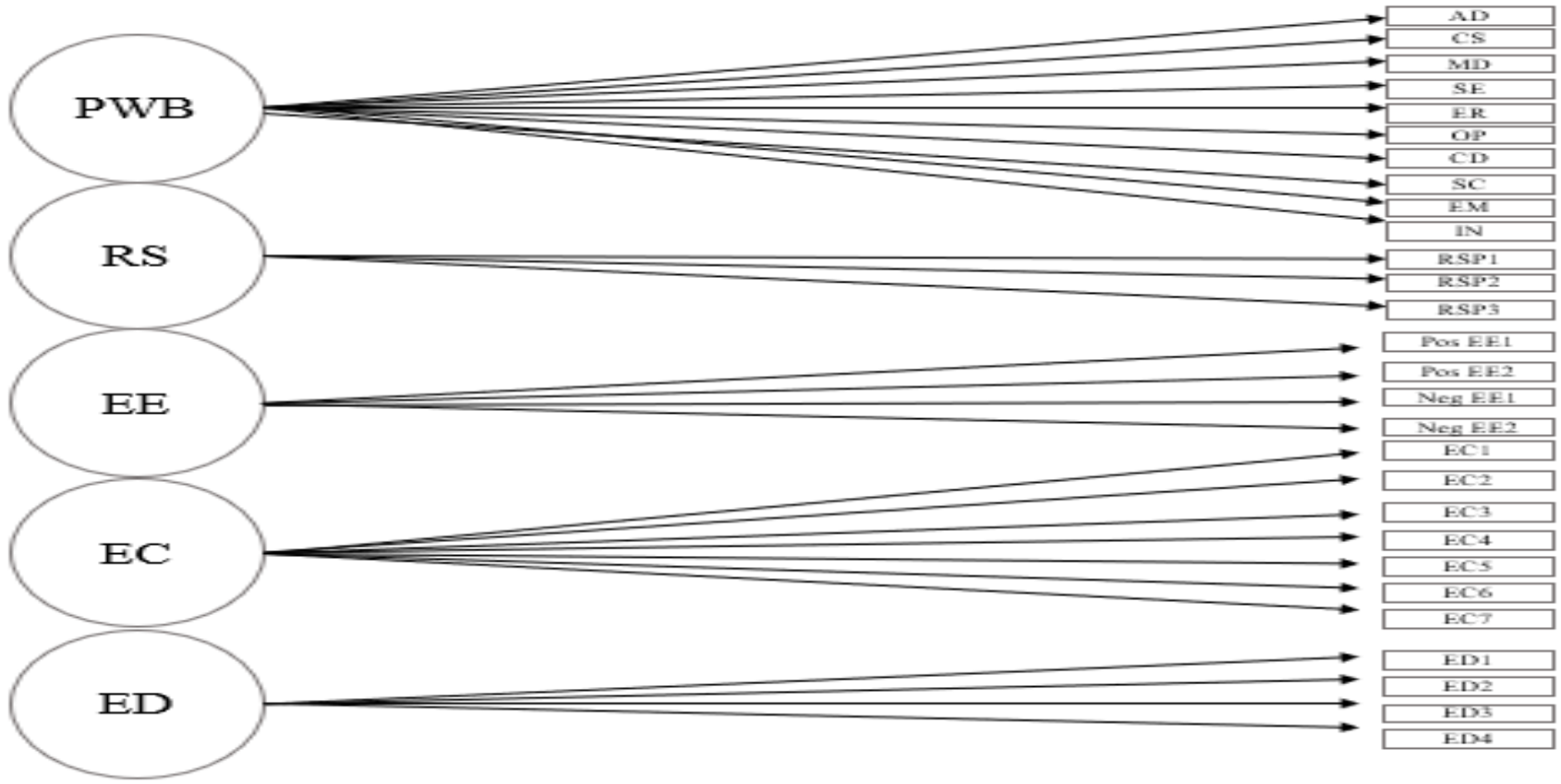


Figure 9. The original measurement model which did not converge. The dotted lines indicate the reference variable utilized to provide a metric to the latent variable. AD = Adaptability; CS = Conscientiousness; MD = Mindfulness; SE = Self-Efficacy; ER = Emotional self-regulation; OP = optimism; CD = Connectedness; SC = Social competence; EM = Empathy; IN = Initiative. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. PosEE1 = Emotion expression parcel composed of half of the positive SEFQ-R items. PosEE2 = Emotion expression parcel composed of remaining positive SEFQ-R items. NegEE1 = Emotion expression parcel composed of the half of the negative SEFQ-R items. NegEE2 = Emotion expression parcel composed of the remaining negative SEFQ-R items.

### **Alternative Measurement Model One**

It was hypothesized that a decrease in the number of indicators per measure would reduce the complexity of the model as well as the error introduced by additional paths. Whereas the number of indicators in the original measurement model included 10 indicators of the PWB latent variable, four indicators of romantic relationship satisfaction, four indicators of emotion expression, four indicators of emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy, and seven indicators of the emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy. The re-specified model included three indicators of PWB, three indicators of relationship satisfaction, two indicators of emotion expression, three indicators of emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy, and three indicators for emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy (see Figure 10). Similar to the original measurement model, the positive and negative emotion expression items collectively served as separate indicators of the SEFQ-R. As part of the re-specification, however, all of the positive emotion expression items were included within one indicator and all of the negative emotion expression items were included within another indicator.

Similar to the first measurement model, this measurement model failed to converge. The standard error, *z*-value, *p*-values, and beta coefficients were not produced. Therefore, no information regarding the path or their significance could be gleaned. Another re-specification that occurred is described below.



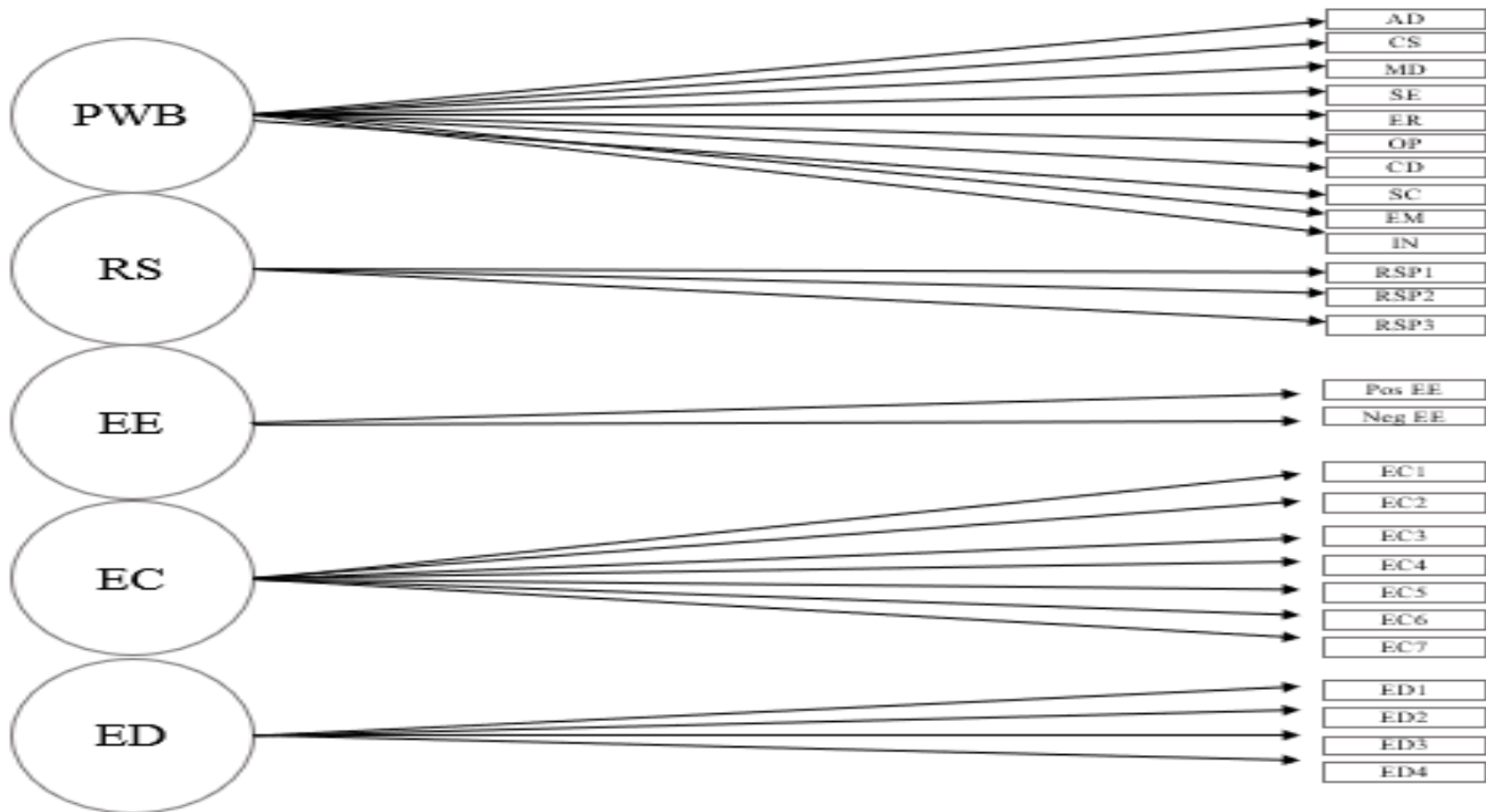


Figure 10. The first alternate measurement model which failed to converge. The dotted lines indicate the reference variable utilized to provide a metric to the latent variable. AD = Adaptability; CS = Conscientiousness; MD = Mindfulness; SE = Self-Efficacy; ER = Emotional self-regulation; OP = optimism; CD = Connectedness; SC = Social competence; EM = Empathy; IN = Initiative. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. PosEE = Emotion expression parcel composed of positive SEFQ-R items. NegEE = Emotion expression composed of the negative SEFQ-R items.

### **Final Measurement Model**

The final model was similar to alternative model one with regard to the number of indicators assigned to each latent variable. Three indicators were assigned to each instrument, which represented a reduction in the number of indicators from the first alternative model. An additional difference between the first alternative model and the final measurement model was the conceptualization of the emotion expression variable. Instead of assigning all positive and negative emotion expression items onto separate, respective indicators, all emotion expression items were randomly assigned to three indicators (see Figure 12).

Upon analysis in R, the final model converged. Overall, fit indices and factor loadings indicated the overall fit of the indicators reflected the latent variables reasonably well. The chi-square of the measurement model was significant,  $\chi^2(80, N = 167) = 155.024, p = 0.000$ . It was important to note that “the chi-square statistic lacks power and because of this may not discriminate between good fitting models and poor fitting models” (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Although the standardized root mean residual (SRMR) was .06, which is listed as acceptable in Table 17, it was slightly outside of the acceptable level when combined with the RMSEA level. It is important to note, however, that the chi-square test is sensitive to small sizes (Meyers et al., 2016). Factor loadings ranged from .41 to .97, which indicated the indicators were adequately representative of the latent variables. However, the other four fit indices either approached or met the appropriate levels indicating good fit. Specifically, the CFI was .95, which fell within the suggested level (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Similarly, the RMSEA was 0.08 (CI = 0.057-0.092), which was at the higher limit of the acceptable range.

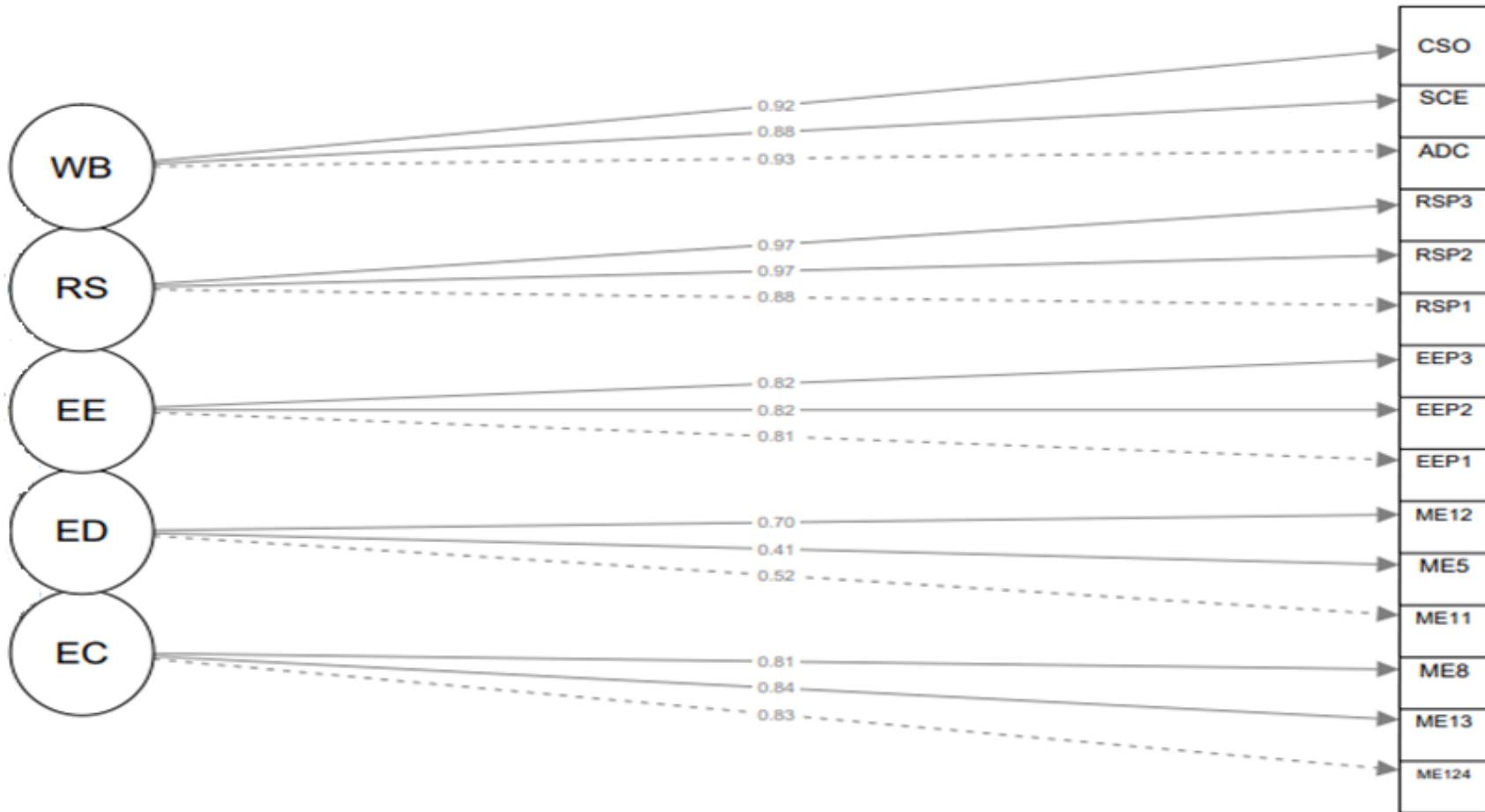


Figure 11. The final measurement model which failed to converge. The dotted lines indicate the reference variable utilized to provide a metric to the latent variable. CSO = Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Self-Regulation, and Mindfulness, SCE = Social Competence, Empathy and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. ADC = Adaptability, Connectedness, and Initiative. JWS subscales. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. EEP1 = Emotion Expression Parcel 1. EEP2 = Emotion Expression Parcel 2. EEP3 = Emotion Expression Parcel

Table 17

*Covariances Within the Final Measurement Model*

	Unstandardized	SE	p-value	Standardized
<b>Emotion-Coaching</b>				
ED	0.020	0.043	0.644	0.050
EE	-0.007	0.018	0.679	-0.037
RS	0.137	0.051	0.008*	0.233
PWB	0.047	0.018	0.008*	0.236
<b>Emotionally-Dismissive</b>				
EE	0.039	0.018	0.029*	0.270
RS	-0.048	0.046	0.291	-0.109
PWB	0.024	0.016	0.139	0.161
<b>EE</b>				
RS	0.018	0.018	0.316	0.085
PWB	0.003	0.006	0.671	0.037
<b>RS</b>				
PWB	0.048	0.018	0.009*	0.218

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . ED = Emotionally-Dismissive; EE = Emotion Expression; RS = Relationship Satisfaction; PWB = Psychological Well-Being

### Analysis of Research Questions

- Q1 What is the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy (as measured by the Parental Perceptions and Responses to Emotion Expression Questionnaire), emotion expression in relationships (as measured by the SEFQ-Revised), and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships (as measured by the Couples Satisfaction Index) and psychological well-being (as measured by the Journey to Wellness Scale)?

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to provide the strength and direction of the correlations between each path. Correlations were computed after the factor analysis; therefore, each of the measures included only the items maintained in the factor analysis. Correlations between the variables are provided in Table 18. As indicated below, romantic relationship was significantly and positively correlated with

emotion-coaching and psychological well-being ( $p < .01$ ). Additionally, emotion-coaching was also significantly associated with psychological well-being ( $p < .01$ ). Correlational analyses also reflected a significant, positive correlation between the emotionally-dismissive variable and emotion expression.

Table 18

*Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Instruments*

Instruments	CSI	ED	EC	SEFQ-R	JWS
CSI	1.00				
ED	-.11	1.00			
EC	.22 **	-.15	1.00		
SEFQ-R	.14	.22**	-.03	1.00	
JWS	.22 **	.04	.20**	.07	1.00

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ ; CSI = Couples Satisfaction Index; ED = Emotionally-Dismissive; EC = Emotion-Coaching; SEFQ-R = Self Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire – Revised; JWS = Journey to Wellness Scale.

- Q1.1 Does the parental meta-emotion philosophy of participants' caregivers predict satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
- Q1.2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and satisfaction in young adult romantic relationships?
- Q2 Does emotional expression mediate the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and psychological well-being?

Research questions 1.1, 1.2, and 2 were answered by analyzing the structural equation model and beta coefficients of each path. Within each discussion of models one

and two, the answer for the aforementioned research questions is presented. A subsequent overview of findings concludes the chapter.

### **Structural Model One**

The interpretation of the standardized estimates and explained variances follows the analysis of the fit indices when evaluating a structural model (Kline, 2005). The standardized estimates, which were interpreted as beta coefficients, provided information regarding the strength and direction of the relationship between the exogenous and their respective endogenous variables. Specifically, the unit of change seen in the dependent variable as the level of the independent variable changes was stated. The three significant paths in structural model one ran from the emotionally-dismissive and emotion expression variables, between the emotion-coaching and relationship satisfaction variables, and between the relationship satisfaction and PWB.

Regarding the first significant path, emotion expression increased .26 for every unit increase in emotionally-dismissive parenting. Together, the emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive variables were responsible for 7% of the explained variance in emotion expression. Similar unit increases were found between the emotion-coaching and relationship satisfaction variables. For every unit increase in emotion-coaching, relationship satisfaction increased .22. The amount of variance in relationship satisfaction attributable to emotion-coaching, emotionally-dismissive parenting, and emotion expression was 9%. The third significant path ran from relationship satisfaction and PWB, for which a positive association was present. For every unit increase in relationship satisfaction, PWB increased .25. Further, emotion coaching, emotionally-dismissive parenting, relationship satisfaction, and emotion expression accounted for 5%

of variance in PWB. The parameters for the first structural model are detailed in Table 19 while the covariances are provided in Table 20.

Four indirect effects were examined. These paths included emotion expression as the mediator between the following variables: emotion-coaching and relationship satisfaction ( $p = 0.576$ ), emotion-coaching and PWB ( $p = 0.802$ ), emotionally-dismissive parenting and relationship satisfaction ( $p = 0.235$ ), and emotionally-dismissive parenting and PWB ( $p = 0.785$ ). As the  $p$ -values indicated, no mediational effects were observed.

Table 19

*Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Direct Effects and Indirect Effects in Model One*

Parameter	Estimate	SE	$p$ -value	Stand.
<b>Direct Effects</b>				
EC → EE	-0.020	0.032	0.540	-0.055
ED → EE	0.097	0.045	0.032*	0.259
EE → PWB	0.074	0.027	0.007*	0.218
ED → RS	0.024	0.086	0.783	0.023
EC → RS	-0.173	0.122	0.154	-0.153
EE → RS	0.273	0.092	0.003*	0.249
PWB → RS	0.401	0.265	0.130	0.133
<b>Indirect Effects</b>				
EC → EE → RS	-0.008	0.014	0.576	-0.007
ED → EE → RS	0.039	0.033	0.235	0.034
EC → EE → PWB	-0.000	0.002	0.802	-0.001
ED → EE → PWB	0.002	0.008	0.785	0.006

*Note.*  $N = 167$ . \*  $p < .05$ . *SE* = Standard Error.

Table 20

*Covariances of Structural Model One*

Parameter	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Standardized
ED → EC	0.037	0.054	0.499	0.070



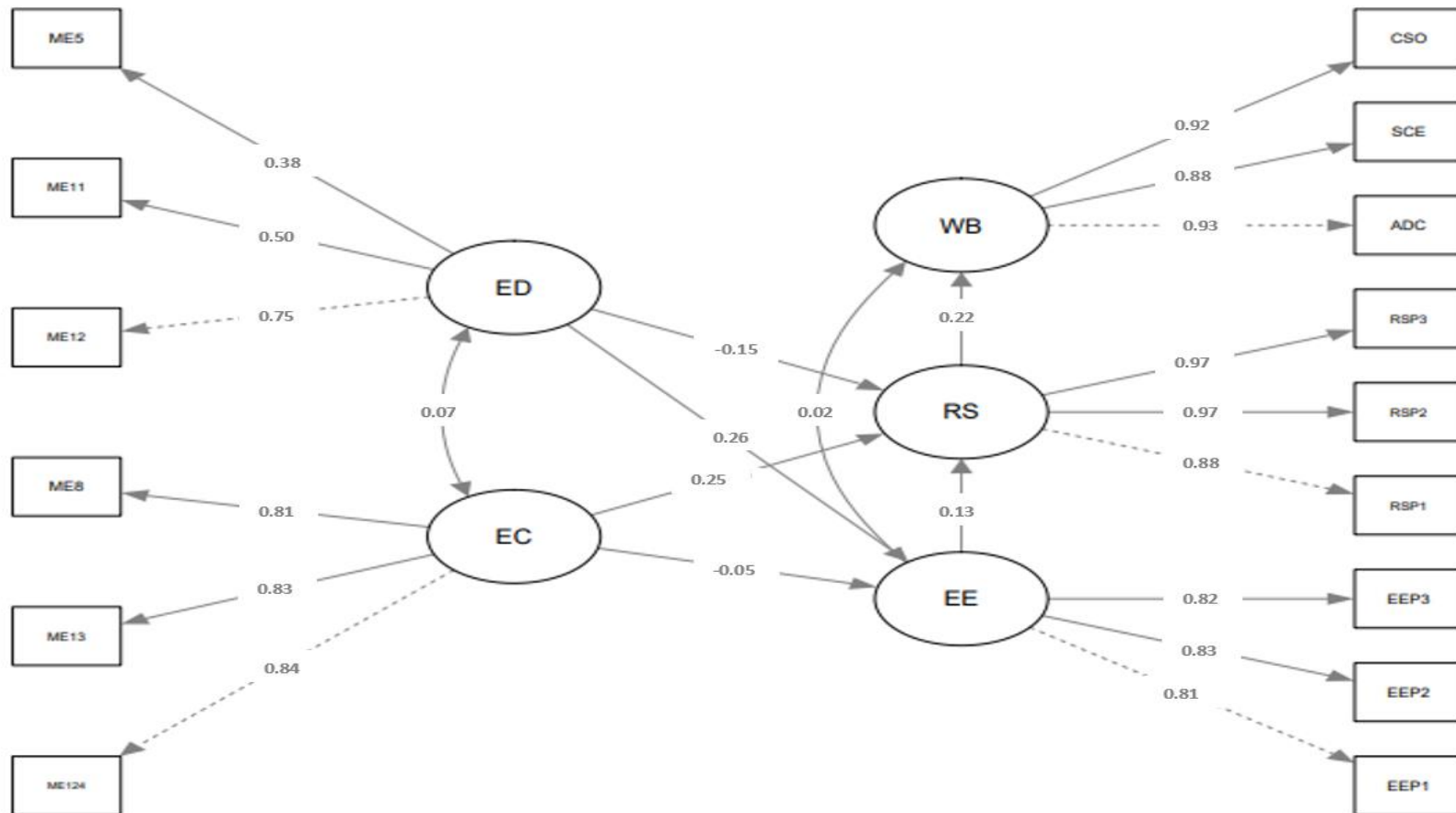


Figure 12. Structural model one. CSO = Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Regulation, and Mindfulness, SCE = Social Competence, Empathy and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. ADC = Adaptability, Connectedness, and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. EEP1 = Emotion Expression Parcel 1. EEP2 = Emotion Expression Parcel 2. EEP3 = Emotion Expression Parcel 3.

## Structural Model Two

Model two was identical to the first model, excluding the direction of relationship between PWB and romantic relationship satisfaction. Whereas the first alternate model suggested a unidirectional path from relationship satisfaction to PWB, the second alternative model tested if there was a unidirectional path from PWB to relationship satisfaction. The decision to examine this direction of influence was based on previous literature findings that indicated the ability of PWB to impact relationship satisfaction (Weisskirch, 2017; Whitton et al., 2013).

Overall, the fit indices indicated the model reflected the data reasonably well. Consistent with recommendations by Meyers et al. (2016), the interpretation of the chi-square test was supplemented with the interpretation of several other fit indices (e.g., CFI, RMSEA, TLI, SRMR). The CFI and RMSEA met the cut-off levels needed to indicate model fit. The CFI value was .95, which reflected acceptable model-to-data fit as did the RMSEA value of .08. When combined with the RMSEA .08 value, the SRMR value of .08 was slightly high. Likewise, a chi-square test was also conducted and was significant,  $\chi^2(82, N = 167) = 164.576, p = 0.000$ . However, overall, the fit indices reflected that model two was an acceptable reflection of the data. As previously mentioned and similar to the RMSEA index, chi-square tests are influenced by sample sizes (Meyers et al., 2016). Given that the chi-square test was dependent on sample size, it should be interpreted with caution.

Within model two, three paths were significant (see Table 21). The first significant path ran from emotionally-dismissive parenting to emotion expression. For every unit increase in the emotionally-dismissive variable, emotion expression increased

.26 of a standard deviation. The second significant path was between emotion-coaching and relationship satisfaction, such that relationship satisfaction increased by .21 of a standard deviation for every unit increase in emotion-coaching. The amount of variance in relationship satisfaction accounted for by the parental meta-emotion philosophy variables and emotion expression was 2% while the parental meta-emotion philosophy variables, emotion expression, and PWB explained 11.2% of variance in relationship satisfaction. The covariances included in the second structural model are provided in Table 22.

Table 21

*Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Direct Effects and Indirect Effects in Model Two*

Parameter	Estimate	SE	p-value	Standardized
<b>Direct Effects</b>				
EC → EE	-0.019	0.032	0.553	-0.053
ED → EE	0.101	0.046	0.029*	0.263
EE → PWB	0.042	0.088	0.633	0.041
ED → RS	-0.207	0.125	0.098	-0.180
EC → RS	0.227	0.090	0.011*	0.209
EE → RS	0.397	0.262	0.129	0.132
PWB → RS	0.562	0.229	0.014*	0.191
<b>Indirect Effects</b>				
EC → EE → RS	-0.008	0.014	0.586	-0.007
ED → EE → RS	0.040	0.034	0.235	0.035

*Note.*  $N = 167$ . \*  $p < .05$ . *SE* = Standard Error.

Two indirect effects were also examined in model two. One path examined the indirect effect of emotion coaching through emotion expression on relationship satisfaction, while the second path examined the indirect effect of emotionally-dismissive parenting through emotion expression on relationship satisfaction. Neither path was

statistically significant, indicating emotion expression did not appear to be a mechanism through which parental meta-emotion philosophy influenced relationship satisfaction.

Table 22

*Covariances of Structural Model Two*

Parameter	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Standardized
ED → EC	0.033	0.054	0.621	0.065

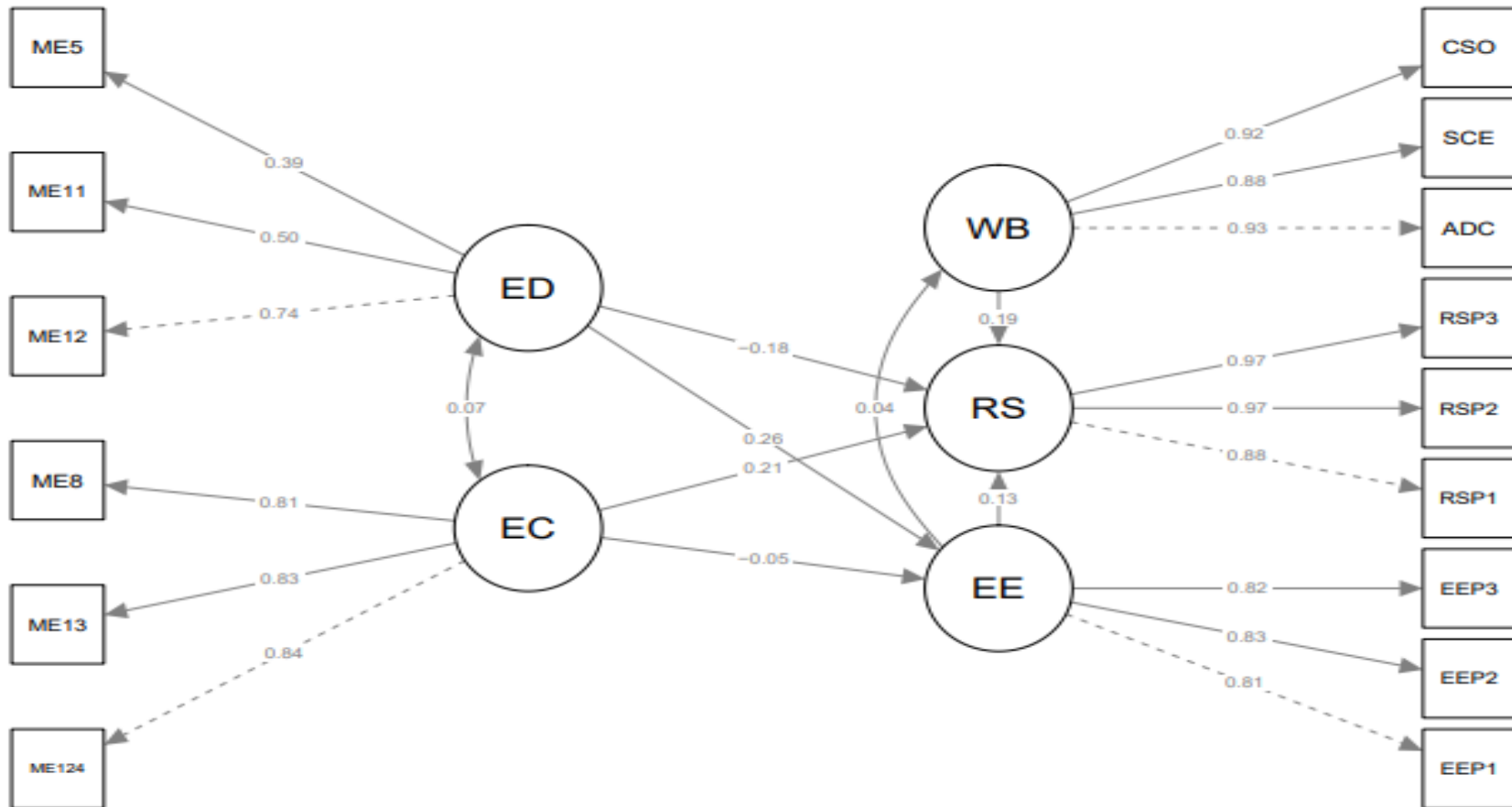


Figure 13. Structural model two. CSO = Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Regulation, and Mindfulness, SCE = Social Competence, Empathy and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. ADC = Adaptability, Connectedness, and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. EEP1 = Emotion Expression Parcel 1. EEP2 = Emotion Expression Parcel 2. EEP3 = Emotion Expression Parcel 3

- Q3 What is the stability of participants reported psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction about two months later for those in different reported relationship statuses?

Test-retest correlations between the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) and CSI (Funk & Rogge, 2007) data collected at data collection times one and two are provided in Table 23. The 81 participants who participated in both data collection time points were divided based on their responses to the question, “Has your relationship status changed since the last time that you participated in this study?” The first two possible response options were “Yes.” The first response indicated the participant was originally single but was currently in a relationship while the second represented those who were in a relationship but were currently single. Nineteen participants reported different relationship statuses (e.g., selected either the first or second response). The third and fourth options of the question indicated the participants’ relationship status had not changed--the third response reflected the participant was in the same relationship at both data collection points and the fourth option indicated the participant was in a relationship with a different partner than the first data collection. The number of participants who reported the same relationship status was 62. Correlations within each change in relationship status group were significant ( $p < .01$ ). However, given the low number of participants who reported a relationship change ( $n = 19$ ), it was important to interpret these results with caution.

Table 23

*Test-Retest Reliability of the Journey to Wellness Scale and Couples Satisfaction Index*

Relationship Status Change	JWS	CSI
Yes	.86**	.71**
No	.77**	.79**

*Note.*  $p < .01$ .

- Q4 Are there any differences in the psychological well-being profiles (as measured by the JWS) of students who stay in college (at data collection point two) and those who are no longer enrolled in college?

An independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine if a significant difference existed between participants who were still enrolled at the University of Northern Colorado at the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester and those who were not. As evidenced by Table 24, 68 participants were enrolled in Fall 2018 and 13 participants were not enrolled. An employee of the Office of Institutional Reporting and Analysis Services cross-referenced the data from the non-enrolled participants with graduation lists and found six of those participants had graduated. Because those participants were no longer enrolled due to finishing their educational careers at the university, their data were excluded from this independent samples *t*-test. Thus, the final number of non-enrolled participants was eight. The descriptive statistics for both groups are presented below.

Table 24

*Journey to Wellness Scale Descriptive Statistics for Participants Separated by College Enrollment*

Participants	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Enrolled 68	51.85	10.75	27.00	64.00
Non-Enrolled 8	47.48	8.39	32.31	57.11

*Note.* *SD* = Standard Deviation.

An independent sample *t*-test indicated no statistically significant difference in the scores for participants who were enrolled in college ( $M = 51.85$ ,  $SD = 10.75$ ) and those who were not ( $M = 47.48$ ,  $SD = 8.39$ );  $t(76) = .75$ ,  $p = 0.45$ . More specifically, there was

no significant difference in PWB as measured by the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) between individuals who were enrolled and not enrolled in Fall 2018. It is important to note, however, that the number of non-enrolled participants was not large enough to reflect a difference if a significant difference existed. According to G\*Power, 128 participants with 64 participants in each group would be needed to indicate a significant difference if one existed (Faul & Erdfelder, 1992).



## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The current study sought to understand how a variable early in an individual's life--parental meta-emotion philosophy--directly and indirectly influenced individuals later in the developmental timespan, specifically in their relationship satisfaction, psychological well-being (PWB), and emotion expression. Emotion expression was also entertained as a mediator among parental meta-emotion philosophy and relationship satisfaction and PWB. Whereas past studies examined parental meta-emotion philosophy and aspects of PWB early in individuals' lives, the current study sought to fill in the gaps of existing research to examine if parental meta-emotion philosophy was influential in similar ways during young adulthood. Furthermore, the current study suggested parental meta-emotion philosophy impacted individuals in romantic relationships through emotional expression, which individuals were hypothesized to learn from their parents through social learning theory (Bandura, 1973) as well as the shaping of emotion expression within the home environment.

#### **Overview of Correlation Analyses**

Parental meta-emotion philosophy was defined as parental perception of one's experience with differing emotions as well as parental response to their children's emotion expression (Gottman et al., 1996). Three dimensions separated out the types

parental meta-emotion philosophy: awareness of one's emotions, awareness of the child's emotions, and coaching of emotions. Consistent with previous research, two types of parental meta-emotion philosophy were examined: emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive. Parental meta-emotion philosophy variables were correlated with the three other variables of interest as well as considered within a structural equation modeling context.

Correlational analyses revealed significant correlations between parental meta-emotion philosophy variables and young adult characteristics. For example, a significant, positive relationship existed between emotion-coaching and romantic relationship satisfaction. Although correlational analyses were unable to make causal inferences, individuals who currently experienced higher levels of romantic relationship satisfaction also reported exposure to emotion-coaching behaviors during childhood.

Emotion-coaching was also significantly and positively related to young adult PWB. Individuals exposed to the emotion-coaching variable also scored high on measures of PWB. Although not a causal relationship, results indicated emotion-coaching contributed to healthy PWB.

Given the current study's conceptualization of the learning of emotion expression through social learning theory and the shaping of behavior within the home environment, an unexpected finding was the significant and positive relationship between emotionally-dismissive parenting and emotion expression. It was expected that individuals who were raised according to an emotionally-dismissive philosophy would be less likely to display emotions. However, correlational analyses as well as beta coefficients within the structural model did not support this finding (e.g.,  $r = .22, p < .01$ ). A potential

explanation for this finding could be other environments (e.g., peer groups, school, community activities) in which the individuals were socialized. For example, friendships become increasingly important and emphasized modes of socialization during the late childhood and early adolescent stages. It is possible the influences of friendships and romantic relationships encouraged the use of emotion expression even if these individuals were not encouraged to do so within the home environment.

As expected, PWB and romantic relationship satisfaction were significantly and positively related to each other. This added to the breadth of research that also demonstrated correlational links between these two variables (Demir, 2008; Trub, Powell, Biscardi, & Rosenthal, 2018).

### **Overview of Structural Equation Modeling**

Examining the complexity of the interrelationships between all of these variables required the application of structural equation modeling (SEM). Structural equation modeling analysis is a two-step process that begins with a CFA on a specified measurement model, followed by simultaneous analyses on the interrelationships between the latent variables. The first step of structural equation modeling was a CFA that revealed which measurement model most accurately reflected the data. The original measurement model was informed by a preliminary exploratory factor analysis. After several re-specifications, the final measurement model included three indicators for each latent variable. The final measurement model was utilized for estimating fit indices, beta coefficients, and explained variances. Figures 14 and 15 provide a review of each path.

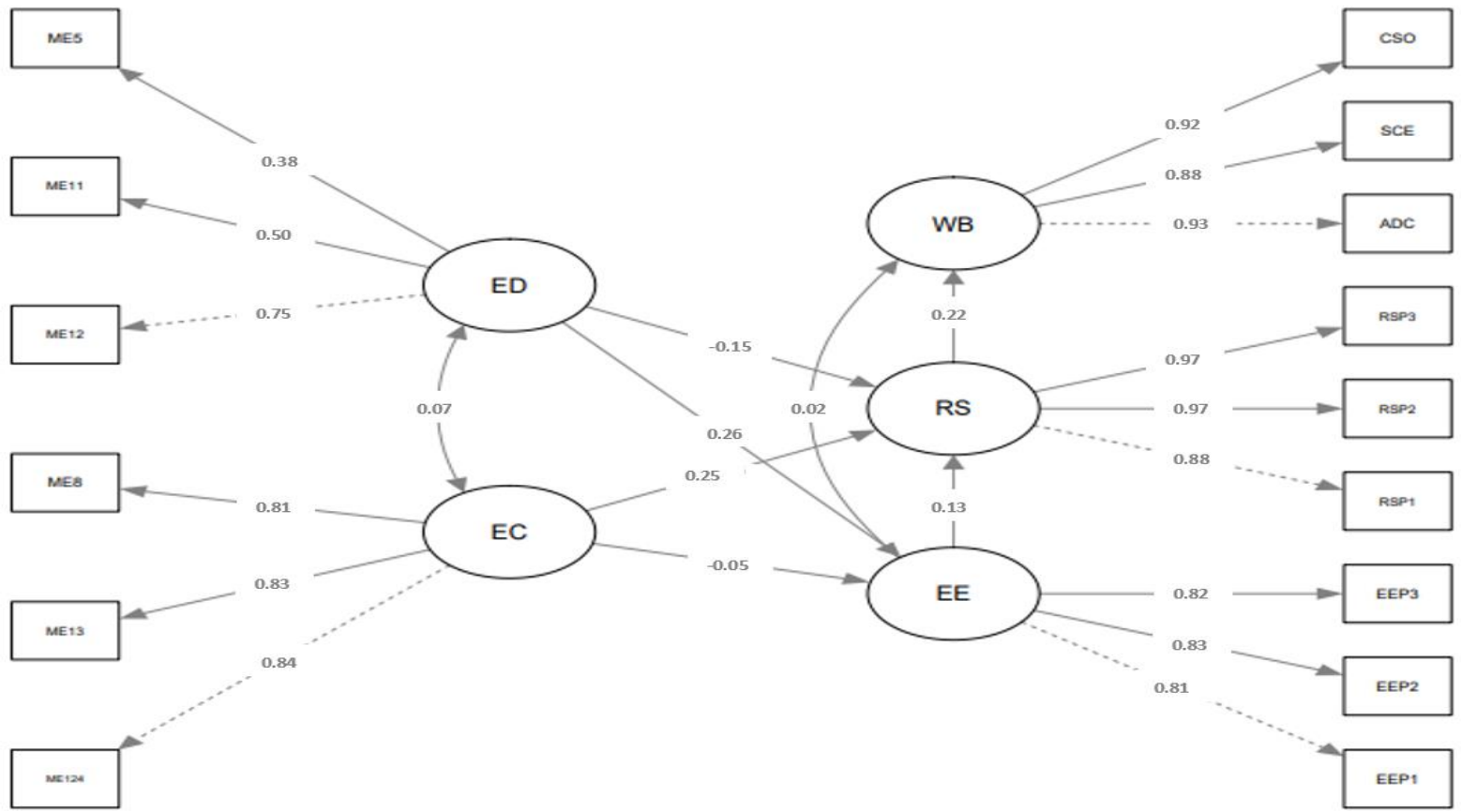


Figure 14. A review of structural model one. CSO = Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Regulation, and Mindfulness, SCE = Social Competence, Empathy and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. ADC = Adaptability, Connectedness, and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. EEP1 = Emotion Expression Parcel 1. EEP2 = Emotion Expression Parcel 2. EEP3 = Emotion Expression Parcel

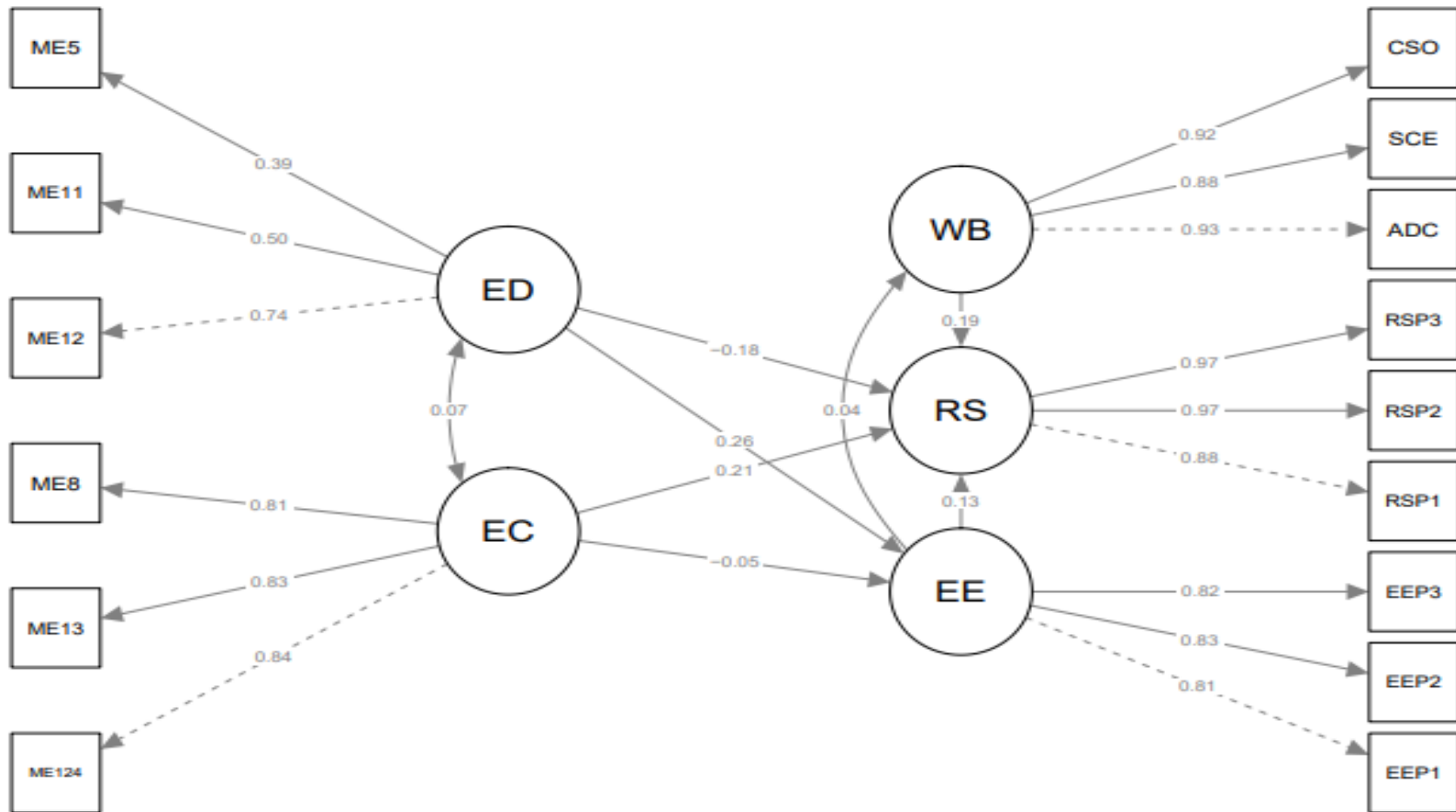


Figure 15. A review of structural model two. CSO = Conscientiousness, Optimism, Emotional Regulation, and Mindfulness, SCE = Social Competence, Empathy and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. ADC = Adaptability, Connectedness, and Self-Efficacy JWS subscales. RSP1 = Relationship Satisfaction Parcel 1. RSP2 = Relationship Satisfaction 2. RSP3 = Relationship Satisfaction 3. EEP1 = Emotion Expression Parcel 1. EEP2 = Emotion Expression Parcel 2. EEP3 = Emotion Expression Parcel 3

**Parental meta-emotion philosophy and romantic relationship satisfaction.**

Emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy was also a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction in both models. Even though emotion expression was not the mechanism through which parental meta-emotion philosophy influenced relationship satisfaction, it was possible the specific dimensions involved in emotion-coaching were partially responsible for the associations between the emotion-coaching variable and relationship satisfaction. Continuing with the social learning theory perspective, it was possible the participants learned and currently held and demonstrated beliefs and behaviors similar to the dimensions of emotion-coaching with their significant other. More specifically, the three dimensions of emotion-coaching were awareness of self's emotion, awareness of the child's emotions, and coaching behavior. When applied to romantic relationships, these behaviors might take the form of emotional attunement and partner responsiveness. Previous research found positive associations between these behaviors that were similar to these dimensions and romantic relationship satisfaction (Fivecoat et al., 2015; Jones, Welton, Oliver, & Thoburn, 2011). Therefore, it stood to reason these behaviors might be one mechanism through which emotion-coaching predicted romantic relationship satisfaction.

**Parental meta-emotion philosophy and psychological well-being.** Even though preliminary correlational analyses revealed significant associations between emotion-coaching and PWB, no direct effects of the parental meta-emotion philosophy variables on PWB were demonstrated in the current models. This discrepancy could be explained by the differences in correlational analyses and structural equation model analyses. The Pearson correlation coefficient only included the two variables--emotion-

coaching and PWB--when determining the correlation. When the association between these two variables was examined within the structural models, the analyses considered all latent variables and pathways. When these other model characteristics were considered, the associations were no longer significant. Therefore, it could be said that high levels of emotion coaching were associated with but not predictive of high levels of PWB.

**Psychological well-being and relationship satisfaction.** Relationship satisfaction and PWB both significantly predicted each other. This was congruent with previous research that examined these two variables within a structural equation modeling framework, which also yielded results that relationship satisfaction was a significant predictor of overall well-being (Dyrdal, Røysamb, Nes, & Vittersø, 2010). Romantic relationships are a form of social support, which has been named a protective factor for PWB. As previously mentioned, when romantic relationships include several beneficial factors (e.g., relationship-maintaining activities), they can positively impact an individual's PWB. The results from the current study reflected that high relationship satisfaction was predictive of higher PWB.

**Parental meta-emotion philosophy and emotion expression.** Across both models, emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was a significant and positive predictor of emotion expression, indicating higher levels of emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy were perceived to be associated with higher self-reported levels of emotion expression. Given that emotionally-dismissive parenting meta-emotion philosophy did not generally support the experience of expression of emotions, this finding was somewhat unexpected. However, a potential explanation for

this finding might have been the measurement of the emotion expression variable. As previously mentioned in Chapters III and IV, positive emotion expression and negative emotion expression were combined into the same variable. It was possible emotion expression for the participants who also reported high levels of emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was not completed appropriately, which was similar to the discussion presented by Chervonsky and Hunt (2017) surrounding the appropriate use of emotion expression. Another potential reason for this finding might be emotion-coaching acted as a buffer to emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy. A study conducted by Lunkenheimer et al. (2007) found when both emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy were displayed, emotion-coaching mitigated the potential negative influences of emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy. Therefore, it was a plausible explanation to consider for similar results found in the current study.

**Indirect effects of parental meta-emotion philosophy through emotion expression.** Emotion expression was considered as a mechanism through which parental meta-emotion philosophy influenced relationship satisfaction and PWB. This decision was made based on prior research that indicated emotion expression was beneficial for romantic relationships (Impett et al., 2012; Marini, Wadsworth, Christ, & Franks, 2017). Other research studies also suggested the opposite, such that emotion suppression in romantic relationships was detrimental to aspects associated with relationship satisfaction and PWB (Peters & Jamieson, 2016). The parental meta-emotion philosophy variables did not demonstrate significant indirect effects through emotion expression to relationship satisfaction ( $p = -0.560$ ;  $p = 1.188$ ) or through emotion expression to PWB ( $p$



= -0.251;  $p = 0.273$ ). It was possible the conceptualization of emotion expression and the subsequent combination of both positive and negative emotion expression might have impacted the results. In addition, it was possible if these two types of emotion expression were considered separately, then results closer to the expected finding would have been found. Moreover, it was possible that another characteristic specific to varying levels of emotion-coaching and emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was responsible for the influence of emotion-coaching on PWB.

**Measuring latent variables.** The unobservable nature of the variables within the social sciences field poses a challenge when attempting to measure these variables. The common practice within the social sciences field of measuring latent variables to gather information about the unobservable variables includes an aspect of error, given that research does not measure the variables of interest directly. Therefore, it was extremely important to utilize psychometrically-sound instruments to reduce the amount of error introduced by the instruments. Therefore, the test-retest reliability of the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) was examined.

### **Journey to Wellness Scale Test-Retest Reliability**

The current study also examined the test-retest reliability of the Journey to Wellness Scale (Copeland et al., 2016), specifically by examining the PWB of participants over a two-month span. Because past literature indicated changes in relationship statuses might influence PWB, it would be expected that participants who reported a relationship change (e.g., relationship termination, new relationship) would co-occur with a change in relationship status. This would potentially be reflected in a somewhat lower test-retest reliability value. However, the test-retest reliability for these

19 participants was statistically significant. Several potential explanations are proposed for why PWB for Times 1 and 2 was highly correlated, even amongst a relationship status change. As reported in Chapter II, the satisfaction an individual derived from a relationship was largely dependent upon the characteristics of the relationship. When positive characteristics (e.g., commitment, effective communication) are present in romantic relationships, individuals might experience higher levels of relationship satisfaction. The opposite might hold true for an individual who is in a relationship with numerous negative qualities (e.g., emotion suppression). When applied to these findings, it was possible participants who reported a change in relationship satisfaction either left a negative relationship or entered into a new, healthy relationship. Finally, the test-retest reliability should be considered cautiously given the low number who reported a change in relationship ( $n = 19$ ).

### **Differences of Psychological Well-Being Across College Enrollment Statuses**

The final goal of the study was to examine if any there were any differences in PWB across participants with varying college enrollment statuses. This goal was unable to be met due to a lack of participants who were no longer enrolled. Therefore, this goal is suggested for future research.

### **Practical Implications**

The results from this study have direct implications for the field of school psychology. As previously described, the National Association of School Psychologists (Skalaski et al., 2015) created the model for comprehensive and integrated school psychological services. This practice model described 10 central components of the work of school psychologists. The implications of these findings were most relevant to the

Family-School Collaboration Services section. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, school psychologists' responsibilities under the Family-School Collaboration Services section included utilizing "evidence-based strategies to support family influences on children' learning and mental health" (p. 7). Further, these findings related to the Preventive and Responsive Services component given the emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy was a significant predictor of emotion expression and PWB and given children's exposure to their parent's meta-emotion philosophy was predictive of young adult relationship satisfaction. Parent trainings geared toward the early childhood setting might function as preventive in nature. The goals of such parent training might (a) address the cognitive (e.g., attitudes, beliefs) and behavioral components (e.g., actions) of parental meta-emotion philosophy, (b) support parents in effective childrearing practices and support long-term outcomes in children, and (c) include positive reinforcement and active parental participation as these components of parent training have been associated with effective outcomes (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008).

### **Limitations**

Finally, it is important to recognize the current study's limitations. One of the most pervasive of the limitations was the small sample size ( $N = 167$ ). Although some researchers suggested a sample size of 167 participants was sufficient, the general consensus of prior literature indicated a minimum of 200 participants be utilized (Kline, 2005; Meyers et al., 2016). One potential action that could have mitigated this limitation was prolonging the time between the first and second data collections. While two months allowed the data collection with active participation to be completed within the same

semester, it limited the number of participants who had the opportunity to participate. In conjunction with a longer test-retest reliability, participant recruitment at other universities would have provided a larger pool of potential participants. Given the number of participants was directly related to the power of the statistical analyses, a larger sample size would have provided increased power as it related to the amount of variance in the endogenous variables accounted for by the exogeneous variables.

Two psychometric limitations also existed within the study. The Cronbach's alpha of the modified emotionally-dismissive subscale ( $\alpha = .62$ ) failed to reflect appropriate levels of internal consistency. This indicated its items were measuring potentially differing constructs. Therefore, it was possible the emotionally-dismissive subscale did not act as a true measure nor reflected the participants' perceptions of their parents' emotionally-dismissive parenting. Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha for four of the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) subscales (e.g., adaptability, initiative, emotional regulation, conscientiousness) was insufficient, which indicated low internal consistency. Although the overall internal consistency of the overall JWS score was excellent ( $\alpha = .94$ ), several of the subscales lacked sufficient internal consistency. Given that indicators of the JWS were the subscales and several of the subscales displayed low internal consistency with the current study, this was problematic because the less reliable a measure is with a given sample, the increased amount of measurement error there is in the model (Kline, 2005). Recommendations regarding these psychometric limitations for future research are made in the following section.

### **Further Research**

Future research studies might seek to utilize psychometrically sound measures of emotionally-dismissive instruments. In doing so, researchers might be able to more accurately assess participants' perceptions of their parents' emotionally-dismissive parenting. Further examination of the factor structure and potential rearrangement of the JWS (Copeland et al., 2016) items and subscales might also be a goal for future research studies. The last suggestion for future research surrounds differences in PWB across varying college enrollment rates. This would provide information regarding if individuals with lower PWB had higher rates of college attrition.

Future research might also seek to go more in-depth regarding the analysis of young adults' family structure. For example, research indicated around 50% of marriages end in divorce. Children whose parents have divorced might be tasked with traveling between two households. It was possible each parent has a different parental meta-emotion philosophy. Future research might seek to understand if and how inconsistencies in parental meta-emotion philosophy were influential both in childhood and young adulthood. In gaining such knowledge, researchers and practitioners might be more able to design evidence-based interventions that would more adequately address a larger percentage of the overall population.

A final recommendation for further research is to seek further understanding regarding the specific mechanisms through which parental meta-emotion philosophy influences romantic relationship satisfaction. In finding the specific nexus between parental meta-emotion philosophy and such characteristics, more specialized information could inform preventive work (e.g., parent training).

## Conclusion

The present study sought to understand how parental meta-emotion philosophy directly and indirectly influenced young adult characteristics, particularly romantic relationship satisfaction and PWB. To reflect previous literature, theoretical underpinnings, and statistical analyses, this unique assemblage of variables was organized into measurement and structural models. It was hypothesized that emotion expression at least partially mediated the relationship between parental meta-emotion philosophy and romantic relationship and PWB. The rationale for this hypothesis was social learning theory (Bandura, 1973). According to Bandura (1973), children learn and express behaviors they observe in other individuals. When applied to emotion expression, the current study posited that children internalize and utilize similar attitudes and behaviors observed in their parents. Additionally, the emotional environment might shape emotional behaviors (e.g., expression, suppression, yelling, talking calmly) in individuals. Therefore, an individual who grew up in a primarily emotion-coaching home environment was most likely taught to talk through emotions and sit with their emotions. Theoretically, it would be understandable for an individual to utilize similar behaviors within romantic relationships. However, the current study did not find indirect effects of parental meta-emotion philosophy through emotion expression on relationship satisfaction and PWB. Instead, direct effects of the emotion-coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy on young adult romantic relationship satisfaction was demonstrated. Further, the emotionally-dismissive parental meta-emotion philosophy was a significant predictor of emotion expression in romantic relationships. Finally, relationship satisfaction and PWB were significant predictors of each other. Although parental meta-

emotion philosophy did not predict PWB, emotion-coaching did predict relationship satisfaction and relationship satisfaction did predict PWB. Therefore, it is important to support relationship satisfaction to indirectly support psychological well-being.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**



*Institutional Review Board*

DATE: December 19, 2017

TO: Lyndsey Evans  
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1160444-2] Examining Psychological Well-Being in College Students: The Roles of Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy, Emotional Expression, and Relationship Satisfaction

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS  
DECISION DATE: December 19, 2017  
EXPIRATION DATE: December 19, 2021

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

Lyndsey -

**Thank you for your patience with the UNC IRB process and for making the requested amendments to you application. The thorough explanation of why GPA will need to be accessed through student bear numbers is also appreciated and clear. Please be sure to use all of the amended protocols and materials (e.g., consent and assent forms) in your participant recruitment and data collection.**

Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Megan Stellino, UNC IRB Co-Chair**

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or [Sherry.May@unco.edu](mailto:Sherry.May@unco.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

**APPENDIX B**  
**FIRST DATA COLLECTION SURVEY PACKET**



Below are a number of questions that describe how you best remember that your caregivers viewed and reacted to your emotions as a child. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, but please try to recall as accurately as possible.

Use the following rating:

Strongly Disagree (SD)      Disagree (D)      Neither (N)      Agree (A)      Strongly Agree (SA)

If you wish to change an answer please cross it out with an **X** and mark your new answer.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. When I was sad, my parents helped me problem-solve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My parents helped me explore anger.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. When I was sad, my parents were expected to fix the world and make it perfect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. When I was sad, my parents used it as an opportunity to get close.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My parents' thought that sadness is something that one has to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My parents preferred a happy child to a child who is overly emotional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. My parents helped me get over sadness quickly so I could move on to other things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My parents used my experiences with anger as opportunities to bond with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. When I was angry, my parents took the time to try and experience the feeling with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. My parents tried changed my angry moods into cheerful ones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. My parents felt that childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My parents tried to get me to stop me from getting angry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. My parents tried to know what I was thinking whenever I was angry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. When I was angry, my parents helped me solve the problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for sharing! Please continue to the next page



**SEFQ-Revised**

The following statements describe how people express themselves with their partners in various situations. Some of the questions may be difficult to judge. However, it is important to answer every item. Try to respond to each question quickly and honestly about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, and we don't believe that any answer is better than another. If you wish to change an answer please cross it out with an X and mark your new answer.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. Showing forgiveness to my partner when they break a favorite possession.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Thanking my partner for something they have done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Exclaiming over a beautiful day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Showing contempt for my partner's actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Expressing dissatisfaction with my partner's behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Praising my partner for good work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Expressing anger at my partner's carelessness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Sulking over unfair treatment by my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Blaming my partner for relationship troubles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Crying after an unpleasant disagreement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Putting down my partner's interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
12. Showing dislike for my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Seeking approval for an action.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Expressing embarrassment over a stupid mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Going to pieces when tension builds up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following statements describe how people express themselves with their partners in various situations. Some of the questions may be difficult to judge. However, it is important to answer every item. Try to respond quickly and honestly about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, and we don't believe that any answer is better than another. If you wish to change an answer please cross it out with an X and mark your new answer.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
16. Expressing exhilaration after an unexpected triumph.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Expressing excitement over one's future plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Demonstrating admiration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Expressing sorrow about the death of my partner's or my pet dying.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Expressing disappointment over something that didn't work out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Telling each other how nice we look.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Expressing sympathy for my partner's troubles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Expressing deep affection or love for my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Quarreling with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Crying when my partner goes away.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Spontaneously hugging my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Expressing momentary anger over a trivial irritation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Expressing concern for the success of my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Apologizing for being late.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Offering to do my partner a favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>The following statements describe how people express themselves with their partners in various situations. Some of the questions may be difficult to judge. However, it is important to answer every item. Try to respond quickly and honestly about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, and we don't believe that any answer is better than another. If you wish to change an answer please cross it out with an X and mark your new answer.</p>	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
31. Snuggling up to my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Showing how upset you are after a bad day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Trying to cheer up someone who is sad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. Telling your partner how hurt you are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Telling your partner how happy you are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Threatening your partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Criticizing someone for being late.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Expressing gratitude for a favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Surprising someone with a little gift or favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. Saying "I'm sorry" when you realize you were wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for sharing! Please continue to the next page.



### Couples Satisfaction Index

The following questionnaire asks about your last (if you are currently single) or current relationship. Please carefully read each item, and circle the answer that matches your experience. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, regarding your current relationship. (Circle your answer).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	All the Time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
2. In general, how often you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Our relationship is strong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How well does your partner meet your needs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



<i>Please answer the following questions by circling the number that most pertains to your relationship.</i>							
Boring	0	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting
Bad	0	1	2	3	4	5	Good
Discouraging	0	1	2	3	4	5	Hopeful
Enjoyable	5	4	3	2	1	0	Miserable
Full	5	4	3	2	1	0	Empty
Sturdy	5	4	3	2	1	0	Fragile

### Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS)

**Directions:** Please complete all the items below to the best of your ability. Select ONLY ONE response by circling the option that best describes how you see this yourself today.

Use the following rating:

SA = Strongly Agree/ Very much like me

A = Agree/ Like me

D = Disagree / Unlike me

SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

1. I am open minded.	SA	A	D	SD
2. I belong.	SA	A	D	SD
3. I blame other people for my problems.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I can stop myself when I am going to say something I will regret.	SA	A	D	SD
5. All people have value.	SA	A	D	SD
6. I am not engaged in life.	SA	A	D	SD
7. I know what I am good at and not good at.	SA	A	D	SD
8. My problems seem to be never ending.	SA	A	D	SD
9. I give up easily on difficult tasks.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I am respectful of others.	SA	A	D	SD
11. After an event, I typically find ways to do better	SA	A	D	SD
12. I am cared for and loved.	SA	A	D	SD
13. I care about my health.	SA	A	D	SD
14. After leaving a heated argument, I can return and talk to the person I am mad at.	SA	A	D	SD
15. I am grateful for what I have.	SA	A	D	SD
16. I know what I want and how to get it.	SA	A	D	SD
17. I sense what to do next.	SA	A	D	SD
18. I often feel hopeless.	SA	A	D	SD
19. Sometimes it helps to have another's opinion.	SA	A	D	SD
20. I often sense what others are feeling.	SA	A	D	SD
21. If I can't do something one-way, I'll do it another way.	SA	A	D	SD
22. I feel like I belong at school.	SA	A	D	SD
23. I am dependable.	SA	A	D	SD
24. I can remove myself from a frustrating situation.	SA	A	D	SD
25. I enjoy differences in people.	SA	A	D	SD
26. I am not afraid to take a risk when it comes to starting a project.	SA	A	D	SD
27. I have learned a great deal from past experiences.	SA	A	D	SD
28. I keep on trying, as I know I will get there.	SA	A	D	SD
29. I take pride in my accomplishments.	SA	A	D	SD
30. Listening is a very important skill.	SA	A	D	SD
31. It's important to be flexible.	SA	A	D	SD

SA = Strongly Agree/ Very much like me  
 A = Agree/ Like me  
 D = Disagree / Unlike me  
 SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

32. I do not get support from friends and the community.	SA	A	D	SD
33. I exercise regularly.	SA	A	D	SD
34. I value feedback from people about how I handle different tense situations.	SA	A	D	SD
35. I can see things through other peoples' eyes.	SA	A	D	SD
36. I set challenging goals.	SA	A	D	SD
37. I know what I am feeling at the moment.	SA	A	D	SD
38. I often think life is meaningless.	SA	A	D	SD
39. Learning new things is fun.	SA	A	D	SD
40. I enjoy participating in activities with others.	SA	A	D	SD
41. I am prepared for change.	SA	A	D	SD
42. I am close to one or both of my parents.	SA	A	D	SD
43. I am responsible for my actions.	SA	A	D	SD
44. I don't let little things upset me.	SA	A	D	SD
45. I cannot accept another's point of view.	SA	A	D	SD
46. I am passionate about what I do.	SA	A	D	SD
47. I am aware of how I make other people feel.	SA	A	D	SD
48. I have hope for the future.	SA	A	D	SD
49. I feel organized in most aspects of my school life.	SA	A	D	SD
50. I am easy to be with.	SA	A	D	SD
51. I try to find new ways of looking at things.	SA	A	D	SD
52. I feel supported and listened to in my life.	SA	A	D	SD
53. I finish what I start.	SA	A	D	SD
54. I feel in control of my emotions.	SA	A	D	SD
55. I have concern for the welfare of others.	SA	A	D	SD
56. I am not easily discouraged from something I want.	SA	A	D	SD
57. Criticism is hard to take, but it makes me stronger.	SA	A	D	SD
58. It's important to see the humor in things.	SA	A	D	SD
59. I am confident and self-assured.	SA	A	D	SD
60. I am not comfortable sharing my feelings.	SA	A	D	SD
61. I am agreeable.	SA	A	D	SD
62. In my family, nobody listens to one another.	SA	A	D	SD
63. The choices I make are thoughtful ones.	SA	A	D	SD
64. I get upset when others don't see things my way.	SA	A	D	SD
65. I stand up for people who cannot stand up for themselves.	SA	A	D	SD
66. I envision what I want, and make a plan on how to get it.	SA	A	D	SD
67. I lack confidence in my abilities.	SA	A	D	SD
68. I have positive expectations of others.	SA	A	D	SD
69. I find ways to accomplish difficult tasks.	SA	A	D	SD
70. People say that I am thoughtful.	SA	A	D	SD
71. I need to be perfect.	SA	A	D	SD



SA = Strongly Agree/ Very much like me  
 A = Agree/ Like me  
 D = Disagree / Unlike me  
 SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

72. My friends are very supportive.	SA	A	D	SD
73. I can admit to mistakes I make.	SA	A	D	SD
74. When I am angry or disappointed with someone I talk to them about it.	SA	A	D	SD
75. It's important to forgive each other.	SA	A	D	SD
76. I have lots of ideas.	SA	A	D	SD
77. I am realistic about what I can and cannot do.	SA	A	D	SD
78. I believe the world holds great promise.	SA	A	D	SD
79. I really enjoy being into what I'm doing.	SA	A	D	SD
80. I have meaningful relationships.	SA	A	D	SD

Thank you! I do appreciate the time you have spent so far.

<b>Demographic Form</b>
-------------------------

I am a:       Male       Female       Other. \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old

Currently I am a...	
Freshman in my: <input type="checkbox"/> First semester <input type="checkbox"/> Second Semester	Sophomore in my: <input type="checkbox"/> First semester <input type="checkbox"/> Second Semester

Are you currently in a romantic relationship?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>How long have you been in this relationship?</i> _____
	<i>Are you married?</i> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>How long ago was your last relationship?</i> _____
	<i>I have not been involved in a committed romantic relationship.</i> _____

Who raised you when you were growing up? (Please check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Mother and Father <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Grandparents <input type="checkbox"/> Step-parent(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

When growing up, were your parents	Are your parents currently...
<input type="checkbox"/> Married to each other <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced and remarried <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Married to each other <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced and remarried <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____



*Almost done!*

What is the level of education that your parents/caregivers obtained? (please mark all that applies)	
Mother	Father
<input type="checkbox"/> No High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Attended some College <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree or Vocational School <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/> No High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Attended some College <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree or Vocational School <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree

What is your Race?
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> African American/Black <input type="checkbox"/> Native/Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Did you move to UNC from another place?	
No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
State: _____ City: _____	

How many siblings do you have?	0	1	2	3	4+

How close you feel you are with your sibling(s).			
1	2	3	4
Not At All Close	A Little Close	Very Close	Extremely Close

Thank you! I appreciate your help with my research project!

**APPENDIX C**

**CONSENT FORMS FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
IN RESEARCH AND DEBRIEFING FORM**

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
ONLINE PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: Parents' Responses to Children's Emotion Expression and Current Day Relationship Satisfaction

Researcher: Lyndsey Evans, B.S.

Supervisor: Achilles N. Bardos, PhD

Phone Numbers:

(970)-351-1629

E-mail: [evan7111@bears.unco.edu](mailto:evan7111@bears.unco.edu)

[Achilles.Bardos@unco.edu](mailto:Achilles.Bardos@unco.edu)

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of how caregivers respond to children's emotions, how children express their own emotions when in relationships as young adults and their overall perception of their psychological wellbeing. The following packet contains four questionnaires and a brief background survey. It should not take more than 20 minutes of your time. After you sign the informed consent form and complete the survey, your name, Bear number, email address, and survey responses will remain confidential. All data will be kept on my computer, which is password protected. Only myself and my advisor will have access to this information. When I conduct the data analysis no names or identifiable information will be used or ever reported for an individual response. All reports will be group data.

**Risks** to you are minimal and include your time to complete the survey.

**Benefits:** You may indirectly benefit from participating in the study, as it might provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your upbringing, romantic relationships you might be or have been involved with, and how some may have affected you. You will also benefit from participating by receiving a \$5 Starbucks gift card and be eligible for more rewards if you allow me to contact you in the first two or three weeks of the next academic semester. This reward will include your eligibility for a \$50 drawing and additional \$10 for completing the survey again.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this survey, and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected.

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the survey, you give us permission for your participation. Please request a copy of this form for your future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Best,

Lyndsey Evans  
University of Northern Colorado  
Ph.D. Student

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: Parents' Responses to Children's Emotion Expression and Current Day Relationship Satisfaction

Researcher: Lyndsey Evans, B.S.

Supervisor: Achilles N. Bardos, PhD

Phone Numbers:

(970)-351-1629

E-mail: [evan7111@bears.unco.edu](mailto:evan7111@bears.unco.edu)

[Achilles.Bardos@unco.edu](mailto:Achilles.Bardos@unco.edu)

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of how caregivers respond to children's emotions, how children express their own emotions when in relationships as young adults and their overall perception of their psychological wellbeing. The following packet contains four questionnaires and a brief background survey. It should not take more than 20 minutes of your time. After you sign the informed consent form and complete the survey, your name, Bear number, email address, and survey responses will remain confidential. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my advisor's locked office to ensure the confidentiality of your responses. Only myself and my advisor will have access to this information. When I conduct the data analysis no names or identifiable information will be used or ever reported for an individual response. All reports will be group data.

**Risks** to you are minimal and include your time to complete the survey.

**Benefits:** You may indirectly benefit from participating in the study, as it might provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your upbringing, romantic relationships you might be or have been involved with, and how some may have affected you. You will also benefit from participating by receiving a \$5 Starbucks gift card and be eligible for more rewards if you allow me to contact you in the first two or three weeks of the next academic semester. This reward will include your eligibility for a \$50 drawing and additional \$10 for completing the survey again.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this survey, and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected.

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the survey, you give us permission for your participation. Please request a copy of this form for your future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Best,

Lyndsey Evans, Ph.D. Student  
University of Northern Colorado

### Debriefing Information

Thank you for your participation in this study. The goal of this study was to assess how parents' respond to children's emotion relate to these same individuals' express their emotions in young adulthood. Further, it examined how the previously mentioned factors might affect a person's satisfaction in a relationship and their overall self-evaluation of psychological well-being, such as self-esteem, happiness, and other positive, affective states.

Your participation was important in adding to the literature that is trying to understand factors that affect college students' overall psychological well-being. This is an important area of research because romantic relationships can serve as a protective factor, especially during the transition to and duration of college years. Thank you for your time and effort in making this study possible.

If you would like to participate in the second round of data collection for this dissertation, receive a \$10 gift card, and be entered to win a \$50 gift card to the store of your choice, please provide us with your UNC Bear number and email so that we are able to reach out to you next semester.

If you decide to participate in the follow-up (next semester), you will also be receiving an extra \$10 after your completion of the follow-up materials.

Bear #: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

If you have any additional questions regarding this research, please contact:

Lyndsey Evans, B.S.  
University of Northern Colorado  
Department of School Psychology  
Ph.D. Student  
[Evan7111@bears.unco.edu](mailto:Evan7111@bears.unco.edu)

**APPENDIX D**  
**SECOND DATA COLLECTION SURVEY PACKET**



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
SECOND ROUND OF DATA COLLECTION

Project Title: Parents' Responses to Children's Emotion Expression and Current Day Relationship Satisfaction

Researcher: Lyndsey Evans, B.S.

Supervisor: Achilles N. Bardos, PhD

Phone Numbers:

(970)-351-1629

E-mail: evan7111@bears.unco.edu

Achilles.Bardos@unco.edu

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of how caregivers respond to children's emotions, how children express their own emotions when in relationships as young adults and their overall perception of their psychological wellbeing. The following packet contains two questionnaires and a brief survey. It should not take more than 10 minutes of your time. All data will be kept on my computer, which is password protected. Only myself and my advisor will have access to this information. When I conduct the data analysis no names or identifiable information will be used or ever reported for an individual response. All reports will be group data.

**Risks** to you are minimal, and include your time to complete the survey.

**Benefits:** You may indirectly benefit from participating in the study, as it might provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your upbringing, romantic relationships you might be or have been involved with, and how some may have affected you. You will also benefit from participating by receiving a \$5 Starbucks gift card. You will also be made eligible for one of two \$25 gift cards.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this survey, and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected.

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the survey, you give us permission for your participation. Please request a copy of this form for your future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Best,  
Lyndsey Evans  
University of Northern Colorado  
Ph.D. Student

### Couples Satisfaction Index

The following questionnaire asks about your last (if you are currently single) or current relationship. Please carefully read each item, and circle the answer that matches your experience. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, regarding your current relationship. (Circle your answer).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	All the Time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
2. In general, how often you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Our relationship is strong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How well does your partner meet your needs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



<i>Please answer the following questions by circling the number that most pertains to your relationship.</i>							
Boring	0	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting
Bad	0	1	2	3	4	5	Good
Discouraging	0	1	2	3	4	5	Hopeful
Enjoyable	5	4	3	2	1	0	Miserable
Full	5	4	3	2	1	0	Empty
Sturdy	5	4	3	2	1	0	Fragile

### Journey to Wellness Scale (JWS)

**Directions:** Please complete all the items below to the best of your ability. Select ONLY ONE response by circling the option that best describes how you see this yourself today.

Use the following rating:

SA = Strongly Agree/ Very much like me

A = Agree/ Like me

D = Disagree / Unlike me

SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

1. I am open minded.	SA	A	D	SD
2. I belong.	SA	A	D	SD
3. I blame other people for my problems.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I can stop myself when I am going to say something I will regret.	SA	A	D	SD
5. All people have value.	SA	A	D	SD
6. I am not engaged in life.	SA	A	D	SD
7. I know what I am good at and not good at.	SA	A	D	SD
8. My problems seem to be never ending.	SA	A	D	SD
9. I give up easily on difficult tasks.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I am respectful of others.	SA	A	D	SD
11. After an event, I typically find ways to do better	SA	A	D	SD
12. I am cared for and loved.	SA	A	D	SD
13. I care about my health.	SA	A	D	SD
14. After leaving a heated argument, I can return and talk to the person I am mad at.	SA	A	D	SD
15. I am grateful for what I have.	SA	A	D	SD
16. I know what I want and how to get it.	SA	A	D	SD
17. I sense what to do next.	SA	A	D	SD
18. I often feel hopeless.	SA	A	D	SD
19. Sometimes it helps to have another's opinion.	SA	A	D	SD
20. I often sense what others are feeling.	SA	A	D	SD
21. If I can't do something one-way, I'll do it another way.	SA	A	D	SD
22. I feel like I belong at school.	SA	A	D	SD
23. I am dependable.	SA	A	D	SD
24. I can remove myself from a frustrating situation.	SA	A	D	SD
25. I enjoy differences in people.	SA	A	D	SD
26. I am not afraid to take a risk when it comes to starting a project.	SA	A	D	SD
27. I have learned a great deal from past experiences.	SA	A	D	SD
28. I keep on trying, as I know I will get there.	SA	A	D	SD
29. I take pride in my accomplishments.	SA	A	D	SD
30. Listening is a very important skill.	SA	A	D	SD
31. It's important to be flexible.	SA	A	D	SD

SA = Strongly Agree/ Very much like me  
 A = Agree/ Like me  
 D = Disagree / Unlike me  
 SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

32. I do not get support from friends and the community.	SA	A	D	SD
33. I exercise regularly.	SA	A	D	SD
34. I value feedback from people about how I handle different tense situations.	SA	A	D	SD
35. I can see things through other peoples' eyes.	SA	A	D	SD
36. I set challenging goals.	SA	A	D	SD
37. I know what I am feeling at the moment.	SA	A	D	SD
38. I often think life is meaningless.	SA	A	D	SD
39. Learning new things is fun.	SA	A	D	SD
40. I enjoy participating in activities with others.	SA	A	D	SD
41. I am prepared for change.	SA	A	D	SD
42. I am close to one or both of my parents.	SA	A	D	SD
43. I am responsible for my actions.	SA	A	D	SD
44. I don't let little things upset me.	SA	A	D	SD
45. I cannot accept another's point of view.	SA	A	D	SD
46. I am passionate about what I do.	SA	A	D	SD
47. I am aware of how I make other people feel.	SA	A	D	SD
48. I have hope for the future.	SA	A	D	SD
49. I feel organized in most aspects of my school life.	SA	A	D	SD
50. I am easy to be with.	SA	A	D	SD
51. I try to find new ways of looking at things.	SA	A	D	SD
52. I feel supported and listened to in my life.	SA	A	D	SD
53. I finish what I start.	SA	A	D	SD
54. I feel in control of my emotions.	SA	A	D	SD
55. I have concern for the welfare of others.	SA	A	D	SD
56. I am not easily discouraged from something I want.	SA	A	D	SD
57. Criticism is hard to take, but it makes me stronger.	SA	A	D	SD
58. It's important to see the humor in things.	SA	A	D	SD
59. I am confident and self-assured.	SA	A	D	SD
60. I am not comfortable sharing my feelings.	SA	A	D	SD
61. I am agreeable.	SA	A	D	SD
62. In my family, nobody listens to one another.	SA	A	D	SD
63. The choices I make are thoughtful ones.	SA	A	D	SD
64. I get upset when others don't see things my way.	SA	A	D	SD
65. I stand up for people who cannot stand up for themselves.	SA	A	D	SD
66. I envision what I want, and make a plan on how to get it.	SA	A	D	SD
67. I lack confidence in my abilities.	SA	A	D	SD
68. I have positive expectations of others.	SA	A	D	SD
69. I find ways to accomplish difficult tasks.	SA	A	D	SD
70. People say that I am thoughtful.	SA	A	D	SD
71. I need to be perfect.	SA	A	D	SD

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 A = Agree/ Like me  
 D = Disagree / Unlike me  
 SD = Strongly Disagree / Not at all like me

72. My friends are very supportive.	SA	A	D	SD
73. I can admit to mistakes I make.	SA	A	D	SD
74. When I am angry or disappointed with someone I talk to them about it.	SA	A	D	SD
75. It's important to forgive each other.	SA	A	D	SD
76. I have lots of ideas.	SA	A	D	SD
77. I am realistic about what I can and cannot do.	SA	A	D	SD
78. I believe the world holds great promise.	SA	A	D	SD
79. I really enjoy being into what I'm doing.	SA	A	D	SD
80. I have meaningful relationships.	SA	A	D	SD

Thank you! I do appreciate the time you have spent so far.

**BRIEF SURVEY**

1.) Has your relationship status changed from the first time you took this study?

\_\_\_ Yes. I was single and now I am in a relationship.

\_\_\_ Yes. I was in a relationship and now I am single.

\_\_\_ No. I am in the same relationship.

\_\_\_ No. I was in a relationship with one person. Now, I am in a relationship with a different person.

2.) Are you planning on returning in either the summer or the fall?

\_\_\_ Yes, summer.

\_\_\_ Yes, fall.

**Please continue to the next page in order to provide your Bear number and email address to receive your \$5 gift card and to be entered to win one of two \$25 gift cards.**

## **Debriefing Information**

### **Second Data Collection**

Thank you for your participation in this study. The goal of this study was to assess how parents' respond to children's emotion relate to these same individuals' express their emotions in young adulthood. Further, it examined how the previously mentioned factors might affect a person's satisfaction in a relationship and their overall self-evaluation of psychological well-being, such as self-esteem, happiness, and other positive, affective states.

Your participation was important in adding to the literature that is trying to understand factors that affect college students' overall psychological well-being. This is an important area of research because romantic relationships can serve as a protective factor, especially during the transition to and duration of college years. Thank you for your time and effort in making this study possible.

**Please select the boxes below that are next to "Bear Number" and "Email Address." In each box, please enter the respective information. This is extremely important as this information will allow me to connect the information that you provided today with the information that you provided at the last data point. It will also give me the information I need to send you a \$5 gift card and put you in the running for one of two \$25 gift card.**

If you have any additional questions regarding this research, please contact:

Lyndsey Evans, B.S.

University of Northern Colorado

Department of School Psychology

Ph.D. Student

Evan7111@bears.unco.edu