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**The Stories We Tell Influence the Support We Receive: Examining the Reception of
Support-Seeking Messages on Reddit**

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Introduction

We often search for support by sharing stressful experiences with others.¹ This support is crucial in helping us cope with stressful events and yet we do not always get the support that we need.²⁻⁴ Due to their accessibility and anonymity,⁵ people are increasingly turning to online communities for support⁶. However, there are mixed findings regarding the effects of these social media interactions for well-being and mental health.⁷ It is unclear how social media interactions can be helpful in some instances, and unhelpful in others.

One way that people influence the support they receive is the *way* they talk about personal events. People are more willing to support individuals who talk about personal life events in structurally coherent and detailed ways compared to those that are low in these structural features.⁸⁻¹⁰ However, narratives shared in everyday life vary in more than just their structural features, including other features related to motivations (e.g., relating to agency and communion with others), affect (e.g., tone and valence), and autobiographical reasoning (e.g., personal growth and understanding). Although researchers have previously employed linguistic (e.g., the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count; LIWC)^{11,12} or clustering methods,¹³ and singular coding schemes¹⁴ to quantify narrative reports, these methods do not capture the emergent, multidimensional nature of narratives.¹⁵ To our knowledge, no study has adequately captured the complex interplay between different narrative features, such as by using latent profile analysis (LPA) and studied their association with support giving.

Furthermore, studies in this area typically ask participants to indicate their support intentions using Likert scales to measure emotional and instrumental support.^{9,10} Hypothetical responses to imagined scenarios are unlikely to reflect actual responses.^{16,17} These responses also neglect the rich verbal ways in which support manifests in real life exchanges between

individuals, or the multidimensional nature of social support. For example, social support refers not just to emotional (e.g., expressing empathy or care) or instrumental (e.g., offering money or practical help) support but also informative (e.g., offering advice or information) and esteem (e.g., giving compliments or validation) support.¹⁸ Protocols such as the social support behavioral code¹⁹ exist for coding each of these support types within behavioral reports of support giving but these have yet to be applied within studies of the effects of narrative sharing on social support.

Online fora such as Reddit – and the support seeking subreddits within it – provide us with a unique, naturalistic opportunity to examine the complex multidimensional nature of narrative descriptions and their association with different kinds of social support. We predicted that there would be patterns of narrative features in support-seeking posts which will in turn significantly predict the quantity and quality of support offered within responses. However, these hypotheses were non-directional due to the lack of prior studies adopting this methodology. The pre-registered hypotheses and data analysis plan can be found on OSF (<https://osf.io/bnmh9/>).

Method

Sample

To accurately detect the true number of profiles in LPA, we aimed to analyze 500 discussion threads with 250 from r/Anxiety and r/Depression, respectively. Being the first LPA of narrative variables, we have no reference point regarding interclass distance or quality of indicators²⁰ so we follow general recommendations^{20,21} to use a minimum sample size of 500. Ethical approval was granted by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (EA220107).

To form our initial corpus, we used Python to extract all public discussion threads and associated metadata (post score, number of comments) posted on r/Anxiety ($N_{posts} = 4,228$, $N_{comments} = 7,790$) and r/Depression ($N_{posts} = 5,000$, $N_{comments} = 6,317$) between March 1, 2021 and March 31, 2021 (a randomly selected month in 2021). From these, we excluded posts under 100 words as they did not have sufficient content to be codable, and randomly extracted 250 discussion threads from each subreddit to be the final sample. Posts that were not support-seeking (e.g., advertising, spam, etc.) were excluded from the analysis, leaving a total sample of 495 discussion threads. Additionally, we included only first-level comments, leaving a total of 750 comments associated with the selected original posts.

Measures

Narrative variables

To examine how people talked about their problems when seeking support, we coded posts for motivational themes, affective themes, and structural elements (Table 1). Taken together, these features cover the two empirical factors of life narratives as identified by McLean et al²². We did

not code for autobiographical reasoning in the current study as these coding schemes were not applicable to the majority of posts during the training phase.

Social support

Following De Choudhury & Kıcıman²³, we coded each comment using an adapted version of the Social Support Behavior Code¹⁹ to measure the type of social support (Table 2) that commenters offered. Unconstructive support was added to the coding scheme during the training phase after noticing comments that encouraged detrimental behaviors and cognitions. Due to the overlap of support types within individual comments, for each post, we calculated the proportion scores for each support type by dividing the total number of that particular social support type by the total number of comments. A higher proportion score indicated a greater prevalence of that particular social support type in the comments for a particular post. Quantity of social support was operationalised as the number of comments and the score (i.e. the number of upvotes subtracted by the number of downvotes) of each post. Due to large variations in the engagement that each post received – many posts received only one upvote (35.35%) and no comments (41.21%) – we transformed comments and scores into four categories each based on their frequency distribution: 1 = posts that received no comments or score; 2 = those that received one or two; 3 = those that received three or four; 4 = those that received more than five.

Coding procedure

Coders were trained on a dataset of 262 discussion threads extracted from the same subreddits during a different time period. We adapted existing coding schemes to fit the structure of narratives found in Reddit posts (e.g., adding unconstructive support). The original and adapted coding schemes are available on the project's OSF page.

Following Syed & Nelson²⁴, three coders coded the original posts for affective tone, agency, communion, complexity, and coherence. Each coder acted as the master coder for one or two narrative variables for the whole dataset and the first author coded 30% of the posts (randomly selected) for all narrative variables to ensure inter-rater reliability. To prevent coder's drift, coding was done in sets of 50 over the course of 10 weeks; interrater reliability was checked after every set.

Given the high consensus between coders during the training phase, the comments were divided equally among the three coders. The first author acted as the reliability coder and coded 20% of each coder's set of comments. The coding process was divided into three sets, and reliability was calculated after each set to prevent coder's drift.

Data analysis plan

Analyses were conducted in Mplus version 8.8 for LPA and R for other elements of the analysis. We used bias-corrected three-step LPA²⁵ to determine whether there were distinct patterns in the way that users talked about their problems when seeking support on Reddit. First, we specified models with increasing number of profiles ($k = 1-9$) using the narrative variables as indicators and specified maximum-likelihood as estimator. We removed theme (a subscale of coherence) as an indicator due to its constrained distribution (more than 80% of posts was coded

as a two), making it a poor latent class indicator.²⁶ For information criteria indices, we referred to Bayesian information criterion (BIC) and adjusted BIC, wherein lower values are taken to indicate better model fit.^{20,27,28} For model fit indices, we referred to the Bayesian likelihood ratio test (BLRT), wherein a significant p-value ($p < .05$) indicates that the current model is a better fit than the model with one less profile.^{20,29} The best model will have the lowest BIC and SABIC values compared to other profile solutions; entropy should be closer to 1; and BLRT should be significant. In addition, the solution should also be theoretically meaningful.

We used the DCAT²⁵ command to examine whether there were significant differences between profiles in the number of comments and score they received whilst accounting for classification error. We used the DE3STEP²⁵ command, to examine whether profile membership predicted each of the six social support types. This method compares the estimated means of each social support type in each latent profile using global and pairwise Wald chi-squared tests of statistical significance while accounting for classification error.²⁵

Results

Analysis of narrative features

A five-profile solution was selected because it had lower BIC and SABIC values and a significant BLRT statistic compared to the previous profile solutions. We retained it over the six-profile solution because although the latter had slightly lower BIC and SABIC values, the BLRT was not significant. Table 4 reports the means and standard deviations for each narrative variable.

Profiles 1 ($n = 50$; 10.1%), 2 ($n = 279$; 56.4%), and 3 ($n = 97$; 19.6%) were the most prevalent and collectively represented posts that were low (more negative) in affective tone, agency, and communion. However, they differed in their levels of coherence and complexity. In contrast, posts in Profiles 4 ($n = 46$; 9.3%) and 5 ($n = 23$; 4.7%) were high (more positive) in affective tone, agency, and communion. Posts in Profile 4 were notably more coherent and complex than those in Profile 5.

Associations with social support

There were no significant differences in the quantity of social support (score and comments) received across profiles (Table 6).

Regarding the quality of social support, emotional support was present in 63% of comments. The test for emotional support was not significant; people consistently offered high levels of emotional support irrespective of profile membership.

Network support was present in 8% of comments. The overall test for network support was significant. Posts in Profile 2 were more likely to receive network support compared to those in Profiles 4 or 5. There were no other significant contrasts between profiles.

Esteem support was present in 14% of comments. The overall test for esteem support was significant. Posts in Profile 1 received significantly less esteem support compared to those Profiles 2 or 3. There were no other significant contrasts.

Informational support was present in 50% of comments. The overall test for informational support was significant. Posts in Profiles 1 or 5 received significantly less informational support compared to posts in all other profiles. There were no other significant contrasts.

Instrumental support was present in 23% of comments. The overall test for instrumental support was significant. Commenters were more likely to provide instrumental support to posts in Profiles 2 or 3 compared to those in Profile 5. There were no other significant contrasts.

Unconstructive support was present in 4% of comments. The overall test for unconstructive support was significant. Commenters were most likely to provide unconstructive

support to posts in Profile 1, and least likely to do so to posts in Profile 5. There were no other significant contrasts between profiles. Refer to Table 7 for further detail.

Discussion

We investigated how people talked about their problems when seeking support on Reddit and whether this influenced the quantity and quality of support they received. There were five distinct narrative profiles of support-seeking posts – which varied across affective tone, motivational themes, and structural coherence – which in turn differentially predicted the *quality*, but not *quantity*, of social support they received.

Consistent with previous research examining the nature of mental health posts on Reddit,³⁰ the majority of posts (Profiles 1, 2, and 3 represented 86% of posts) were negative in affective tone and low in agency; many people use Reddit to share their personal challenges and the negative impact they have on various areas of their life (e.g., work, relationships, etc.). A smaller proportion of posts (Profiles 4 and 5 represented 14% of posts) were higher in agency and more positive in affective tone; these people used Reddit to celebrate accomplishments, seek encouragement, and find validation for the small milestones they are able to achieve despite the challenges in their life. That affective and motivational themes covaried is in line with existing narrative research.^{22,31}

Posts also varied in their coherence and complexity; posts in Profile 1 were lowest, Profiles 2 and 5 were moderate, and Profiles 3 and 4 were the highest. That posts between profiles could share similar affective tone and motivational themes but differ in their coherence (e.g., Profile 1 vs. Profile 3) is consistent with past research on life narratives, which found that structural elements are distinct from motivational and affective themes.^{22,31} Structural elements focus more on the way a story is constructed while motivational and affective themes capture the subjective meaning and evaluation of an event.

Contrary to our prediction, quantity of social support did not vary between profiles. The low effort nature of upvoting means that it may be given indiscriminately based on post titles regardless of post content. Furthermore, most posts received low engagement (Table 6); there may have been too little variability between posts for us to examine the association between these dependent variables and the narrative features of original posts.

However, commenters provided varying types of support based on the narrative profile of the original post (see Table 5 for examples of posts from each profile). Given sufficient coherence, posters who expressed negativity and low agency (Profiles 2, 3, and 4) tended to get more prescriptive forms of support (instrumental and informational support) compared to incoherent (Profile 1) or highly positive and agentic posts (Profile 5). Agency determined whether commenters were more likely to provide instrumental or informational support; posters who expressed a lower sense of agency (Profiles 2 and 3) were more likely to get instrumental support than posters who expressed some agency (Profile 4) and vice versa. Meanwhile, posts that were highly incoherent (Profile 1) tended to receive less prescriptive support compared to other profiles. Notably, posts in Profile 1 were also the most likely out of all profiles to receive unconstructive support which validated their maladaptive cognitions or behaviors—encouraging negative views of the world (i.e., “relationships will only bring you pain”) and unconstructive behaviors (e.g., “just smoke weed and avoid people”). These findings may explain why online social support groups^{32,33} and social media use³⁴ have been associated with increases in self-efficacy. They also highlight the potential dangers that these online communities may pose to certain individuals (e.g., Profile 1). Nevertheless, these findings support experimental findings that support-provision varies depending on how speakers describe their problems.³⁵

Our findings offer several novel contributions. Whereas existing studies in the area of narrative identity³¹ and social media research more broadly^{11,14,23} typically employ traditional analytic approaches, we highlight the utility of applying a person-centered approach to fully capture the multidimensional quality of narratives and online support-seeking posts more specifically. By demonstrating that different posts can contain different combinations of narrative variables, we reconcile how different aspects of narrative structure relate to each other and, in turn, differentially influence support-provision. Additionally, we highlight the importance of accounting for person-specific effects in social media research. Group-differential approaches may not sufficiently capture individual heterogeneity in media users and may overlook important findings, such as the minority of posts that receive unconstructive support.

On a practical level, our findings demonstrate that there is no one way to get support or to be supportive. This finding contributes to previous research that suggests that the way we describe our experiences influences the support that we receive^{8,9,36} by expanding our understanding of this to novel support forms (e.g., network, informational) that have not been studied in this context. Given these findings, integrating narrative training into therapeutic interventions or creating online resources may benefit individuals, particularly those with mental illnesses and experience difficulty in seeking support. Such efforts can potentially enhance the efficacy of support-seeking and provision for both individuals and their family and friends.

However, several limitations in this study should be noted. Given the observational nature of this study, future experimental studies (e.g., using experimental vignettes such as in Vanaken et al.⁹) can help establish causation. Relatedly, since we used an exploratory LPA with non-directional hypotheses, future research is needed to confirm this five-profile solution and replicate findings with different samples within and outside of Reddit. Examining other social

media sites is crucial to ensure generalizability; different user bases between sites may influence findings.³⁷ Given the nature of Reddit, posters were also seeking support from strangers. This may have influenced both the content and quality of the shared narratives³⁸ as well as the responses from commenters.³⁹ Future studies can examine whether similar profile solutions and social support outcomes emerge when analyzing support-seeking posts on social media sites (e.g., Facebook) where posters are exclusively sharing with friends. Relatedly, due to the anonymity of Reddit, we did not have demographic data (e.g., age, gender) of users. These variables have been shown to influence the way that individuals talk about personal events⁴⁰ and perceive⁴¹ social support in offline settings. This restricts our ability to explore potential variations in narrative patterns and support outcomes based on demographic characteristics. Future research may consider using surveys or quasi-experiments to collect this information and examine them as covariates. Lastly, given the observational design of the current study, we were unable to examine the original posters' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support they received. The literature on social support emphasizes an important distinction between perceived and received support, highlighting the importance of measuring not only the latter but also perceptions of support. Multiple studies⁴²⁻⁴⁴ and a meta-analysis⁴² have shown that received support is not always perceived as positive or helpful by support-seekers, and may have negative effects when incongruent with the support-seeker's needs. Given the importance of perceived support in influencing well-being, future studies can consider incorporating a mixed-method design to examine which types of support posters in different profiles found helpful and hurtful – this would better inform us of ways to talk about problems constructively.

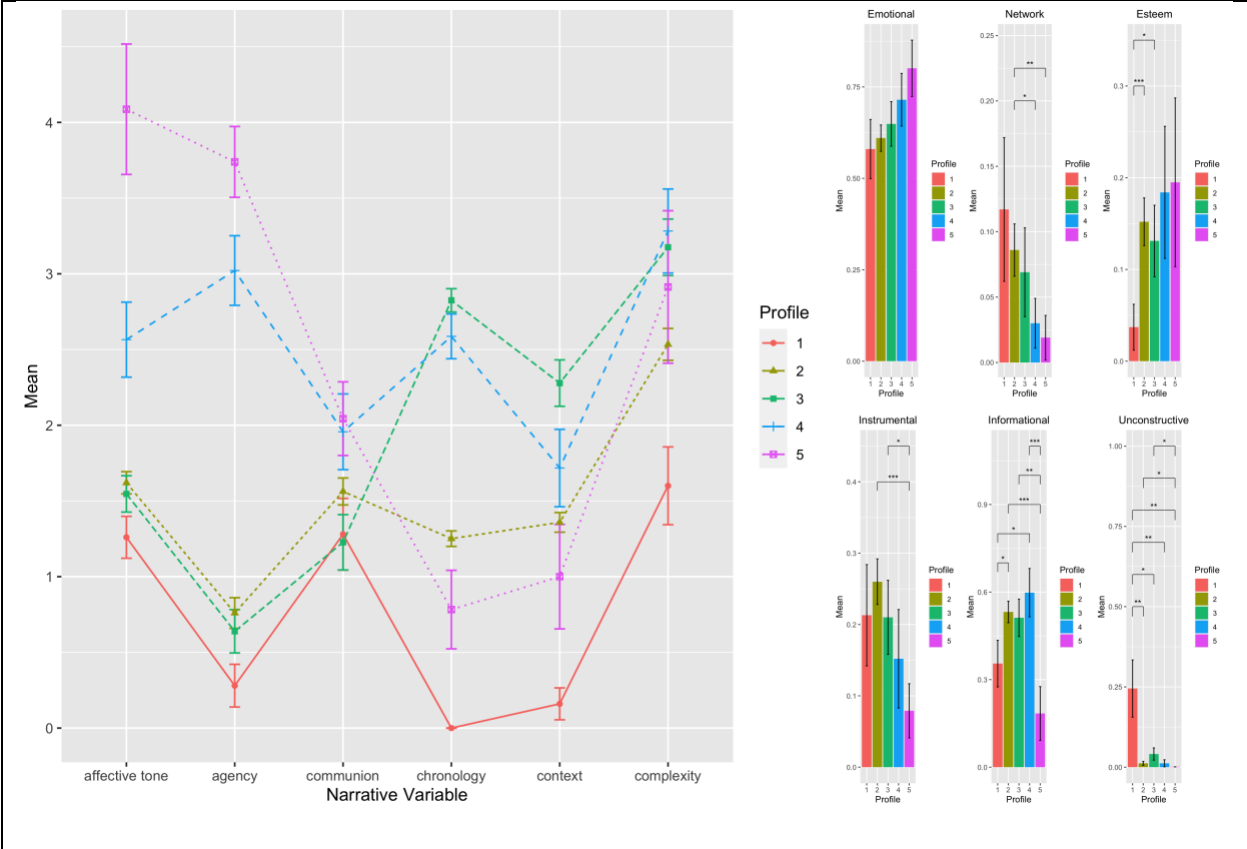


Figure 1. Five profile latent profile solution (right) and mean proportion and significant pairwise comparisons across types of social support (right)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 1

Summary of coded narrative variables taken from Adler et al.²⁴ and McLean et al.²²

Theme	Feature	Definition	Coding (summarized)	ICC
Motivational themes Goal-like orientations that highlights what the individual is seeking/has sought in the past/has achieved	Communion	Relates to interpersonal connection. The protagonist aims to have a sense of togetherness and harmony with other people or their environment, to dialogue, share, help, connect to, and care for others.	Rated on a Likert scale of 0 (low) to 4 (high): 0 – no support, real rejection 1 – perceived no support 2 – mixed OR not code-able 3 – rich connection language, some elements of disconnect OK 4 – rich connection, no disconnect	0.89
	Agency	motivation to impactor influence others or one's life circumstances; Narratives high in agency are fundamentally concerned with the autonomy of the protagonist. Highly agentic narratives describe protagonists who can affect their own, initiate changes on their own, and who achieve some degree of control over the course of their experiences	Rated on a Likert scale of 0 (low) to 4 (high): 0 – completely powerless (vent, no outside input) 1 – contemplate action but not carried out (vent, want outside input, no reflection) 2 – mix/low sense of control (Some reflection) 3 – gain self-insight, good control 4 – completely in control	0.85
Affective themes Concerns the emotional quality of a narrative (either whole/part of it)	Emotional/ Affective tone	The overall positivity or negativity of the story told or of the writing style.	Rated on a Likert scale of 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive): 1 – very negative 2 – somewhat negative 3 – neutral/mix 4 – positive 5 – very positive	0.77
Structural elements How the story is told - e.g., the order of the content, the coherence, complexity, details, and sophistication of the story. This aspect is less concerned about the subjective evaluation or meaning of the event and more focused on how the story is constructed by the narrator.	Coherence	The narrator situates the characters of his story and their actions in a specific context, the story follows a temporal sequence of goal-oriented actions that are culturally recognised, emotions are clearly expressed in support of the point of the narrative, and narrative is integrated into larger life themes and meanings.	For each subscale, coherence is rated on a Likert scale of 0(low/absent) to 3(high). The total coherence score is calculated by adding up scores of each subscale together. Higher numbers indicate greater coherence. Context 0 – no information about time or place 1 – time OR place, any specificity 2 – time and place, one specific 3 – time and place, both specific	- 0.87
		Can be measured according to three dimensions (Reese et al., 2011) : context (places the event in time and location), chronology (the extent to which the narrative is temporally organised), and theme (the clarity of topic in the narrative)	Chronology 0 – no information about temporal order 1 – some info, but not most, on a timeline 2 – 50 – 70% of events can be put on a timeline 3 - >75% of events can be put on a timeline	0.92
	Complexity	The degree of engagement in the narrative processing, as shown by depth of thought and nuance, such as seeing a variety of perspectives or emotions.	Rated on a scale of 0 (absent/low) to 5 (high)	0.78
			For each instance of below, add +1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple perspective taking • Emotional complexity: more than one emotion mentioned • Meaning • Context E.g. post with multiple perspective taking and mentions more than one emotion gets 2	

Table 2

Summary of social support behavior code adapted from De Choudhury & Kiciman²³ and Cutrona and Suhr¹⁹ with examples for each.

Type of SS	Subtype	Definition	Example	Percentage agreement
Informational	Suggestion/ advice	Offers ideas and suggestions regarding their condition, treatments and medications, or general advice about how to deal with the situation or everyday life.	"I would recommend voicing your concerns to your doctor. It sounds like you're obsessing about things, do you tend to get "stuck" on unpleasant ideas?"	85.9%
	Referral	Refers the recipient to some other source of help or refers them to seek treatment		
	Situation appraisal	Reassesses or redefines the situation		
	Teaching	Provides detailed information, facts, or news about the situation, or about skills needed to deal with the situation, or sharing personal experience for their reference or as an example.		
Instrumental	Suggestion	Providing suggestions reflecting practical assistance such as help with daily activities, hobbies, lifestyle changes or specific coping techniques (e.g. breathing exercise).	"Hey, do you wanna talk about it? I'd like to try to help "	90.1%
	Willingness	Expresses willingness to chat privately		
Esteem	Compliment	Says positive things about the recipient or emphasizes the recipient's abilities, progress or willingness to change, or showing appreciation for the recipient.	"Yeah, anxiety can indeed make you feel like you are suffocating..."	88%
	Validation	Expresses general agreement with the recipient's perspective on the situation, or validating their emotional experience		
	Relief of blame	Tries to alleviate the recipient's feelings of guilt about the situation		
Network	Companions	Reminds the person of availability of companions, of others who are similar in interests, experience or suffering	"The whole world is a mess now and everything seems out of step. It's messing with many people. You're not alone."	94.4%
Emotional	Sympathy	Expresses sorrow or regret for the recipient's situation or distress	"I used to be this way too, and from time to time I still find myself being this way."	81.7%
	Understanding/ empathy	Expresses understanding of the situation, mentions they have gone through a similar situation or discloses a personal situation that communicates understanding and/or commonality with the OP.		
	Encouragement	Provides the recipient with hope and confidence		
Unconstructive	Unconstructive validation	Supporting harmful, maladaptive behaviours or validating maladaptive viewpoints	"I agree. This world is full of way too many crappy people. It's why I avoid humans like the plague."	98.6%

Table 3

Profile Enumeration Fit Statistics (N = 495)

No. of profiles	BIC	SABIC	No. of parameters	Entropy	BLRT (p-value)	Class Distribution					
						1	2	3	4	5	6
1	8177.64	8139.55	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	7879.88	7819	19	0.893	0.00	410 (82.83%)	85 (17.17%)	-	-	-	-
3	7715.79	7633.26	26	0.791	0.00	283 (57.17%)	129 (26.06%)	83 (16.77%)	-	-	-
4	7584.21	7497.47	33	0.928	0.00	51 (10.30%)	18 (3.63%)	316 (63.38%)	110 (22.22%)	-	-
5	7497.13	7370.17	40	0.900	0.00	50 (10.10%)	279 (56.36%)	97 (19.60%)	46 (9.29%)	23 (4.65%)	-
6	7391.42	7242.25	47	0.905	0.240	50 (10.10%)	17 (3.43%)	26 (5.25%)	230 (46.47%)	79 (15.96%)	93 (18.79%)
7-9						Failed to converge					

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of All Narrative Variables Used as Profile Indicators for LPA Overall and According to Most-Likely Profile Membership

Narrative Variable	Overall Mean <i>M</i> (SD)	Profile <i>M</i> (SD)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Affective tone ^a	1.77 (0.88)	1.26 (0.49)	1.62 (0.62)	1.55 (0.60)	2.57 (0.83)	4.09 (1.00)
Agency ^b	1.04 (1.20)	0.28 (0.50)	0.76 (0.86)	0.64 (0.71)	3.02 (0.77)	3.74 (0.54)
Communion ^c	1.53 (0.83)	1.28 (0.83)	1.56 (0.76)	1.23 (0.91)	1.96 (0.84)	2.04 (0.56)
Context ^d	1.43 (0.85)	0.16 (0.37)	1.36 (0.55)	2.28 (0.38)	1.72 (0.86)	1.00 (0.80)
Chronology ^e	1.54 (0.96)	0.00 (0.00)	1.25 (0.43)	2.82 (0.38)	2.59 (0.50)	0.78 (0.60)
Complexity ^f	2.65 (1.02)	1.60 (0.90)	2.53 (0.89)	3.18 (0.92)	3.28 (0.93)	2.91 (1.16)

Note. ^a1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive), ^b0 (none) to 4 (very high), ^c0 (none) to 4 (very high), ^d0 (none) to 3 (specific), ^e0 (none) to 3 (specific), ^f0 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Table 5

Examples of Posts Classified into Each Profile

Profile	Example ^a
1	<p>Help super awkward argument with classmates</p> <p>Alright so I talked bad about someone that used to bully me, and the person I trusted to talk about the bully with went and told the bully about it. And then called me disgusting and that she expected better? I hate everyone at my school. My class is so shit. Pick me girls everywhere and disgusting, racist people. All my friends are in another class and ive emailed multiple times to get moved because of my anxiety but the school literally did nothing. Another girl sent an email and got moved into my class.like wtf lmao I give good reasons to move classes and I get ignored but this fudging ANNOYING pick me girl can move all bcs she wanted to??? Im so sick of it. Im gunna sit alone in the back bcs of that annoying snitch. She acts like she’s some angel and an advocate for everything that is good but her friends are all racist and homophobic. All they do is seek male validation. And her reasoning is “they havent done anything wrong to me”???? dang shut up. I hope they live terrible lives. Anyhow the thing im nervous about is the awkwardness and stuff like that I don’t do will without friends near me idk what to do school is so frustrating.</p>
2	<p>Struggling to cope</p> <p>Im having a really hard time with anxiety related to my job. Every time I make a mistake, I feel like everyone is going to finally reveal that they’ve actually hated me all along and I’ll get fired from my only change of getting my life together. This happens with all kinds of mistakes – though more common for small mistakes rather than large mistakes (more rare). Whatever is happening, I always do my job and do it well, but I’m still so anxious every time something goes wrong – thinking it may be somehow related to me. I’ve been trying to tone it down so as not to burden my colleagues – it’s not their fault that my brain is like this. It’s just difficult to live inside my head so much. I got a promotion recently that I worked really hard for, but now that I have it, my brain is in survival mode going above and beyond to try and mitigate any removal of this privilege/promotion. Its so incredibly exhausting but I can’t shake off the feeling that the boss is going to realise I’m actually not what he’s looking for and I’ll loose this chance of securing my life.</p> <p>Honestly, I don’t know if I’m asking for advice or venting, but thank you for reading.</p>
3	<p>I’m such a mess 😞 is this PTSD/C-PTSD/GAD?</p> <p>I’ve always had anxiety for as long as I can remember. I could never pinpoint where it stemmed from but recently, I found out that I was sexually assaulted by my brother when I was 5 years old and he was 20. From the medical files, it seemed pretty bad. Since I’ve learned this happened, sex just makes me feel empty... and it’s made me confused if I have GAD, PTSD, or both. I relate a lot with the symptoms of c-ptsd. I know I cant self-diagnose but I have no money for therapy. Plus, I’m honestly scared to go because I’m afraid I’ll start remembering my repressed memories and it’ll make me more messed up than better. What if it’s just too much for me too handle and I just break? I was so close to my brother... we did a lot of things together and he’s such a big part of me. I can’t believe this happened and I’m hanging on to hope that this is all just a lie. But that hope is stupid, because I saw what the doctors wrote. He wasn’t charged with anything because it went through family court and he was a minor. The doctor lied in court. Everyone completely failed me.</p>
4	<p>I feel like I’m going nowhere in life</p> <p>At twenty-nine, I’ve finally started digging my way out of anxiety and depression. It hasn’t been perfect, not even close, but I’m finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I’m starting to apply for apprenticeship jobs so that I can start a career but with my age, lack of work experience, and my lack of fluency in the language of the country I live in, it’s been difficult to get people to hire me. I really want to get out there and create a fulfilling life for myself, working in a field that I enjoy and can manage without burning out again. It’s just that I feel like I started too late. I wish I could go back 10 years and get the help that I needed. I’m ashamed of what my life has become. So many people my age have already spent years in the workforce, are starting families, and buying homes. I’m nowhere close to doing any of those things.</p> <p>I know it’s not healthy to compare myself to other people but this really bothers me. I thought I was going to be non-functional for the rest of my life and reliant on benefits. Now I’m starting to see a possible new life that I can have, but it’s only possible if I was a bit more hire-able.</p>
5	<p>“Normal” people won’t get this – but I accomplished 3 to-dos yesterday and I feel amazing!</p> <p>I needed to schedule my annual check-up with the gyno, and I’ve been procrastinating on it because, well, that’s what anxiety does sometimes. We also had to make a house insurance claim, and I needed to upload some documents for it, and my dogs have been needing a groomer since 2 months ago.</p> <p>So I finally remembered yesterday and called the gyno to book the appointment. The lady was super nice. I went home proudly and told my boyfriend about it but he didn’t react in the way I was hoping for (e.g. “good job!”). Instead he just asked if I already uploaded the documents for the insurance claim. I had not. It immediately made me feel like my small win was nothing. He has a hard time empathizing with any mental illness, so I don’t think he</p>

meant badly, he just wanted to make sure it gets done. He just doesn't realise how it comes across. Well, ladies and gents, I accomplished two other tasks today! Uploaded the documents and booked the appointment for my dogs. Go me!! I am proud of myself and am prepared to not receive the reaction I want. I'll receive whatever I get and still be happy that I got it done.

Note. ^aTo protect the anonymity of the posters, the wording of these posts were adjusted slightly (without changing the meaning) to make posts unsearchable.

Table 6

Overall Mean and Standard Deviation, Frequency of Categories, and Odds Ratios for Each Profile.

	Profile										Global X ² tests	Pairwise X ² tests ^a
	1	2	3	4	5							
Post score ^a												
	<i>M</i> = 18; <i>SD</i> = 62		<i>M</i> = 12; <i>SD</i> = 130		<i>M</i> = 6; <i>SD</i> = 22		<i>M</i> = 5; <i>SD</i> = 7		<i>M</i> = 20; <i>SD</i> = 43			
	Frequency	OR (95% C.I.)	Frequency	OR (95% C.I.)	Frequency	OR (95% C.I.)	Frequency	OR (95% C.I.)	Frequency	OR (95% C.I.)		
1	23 (46%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	112 (40%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	42 (43%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	18 (39%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	9 (39%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	X ² (12) = 20.95, <i>p</i> = .05	-
2	14 (28%)	1.48 (0.13, 17.55)	101 (36%)	0.14 (0.01, 2.96)	25 (26%)	0.34 (0.01, 6.35)	14 (30%)	0.00 (0.00, 0.00)	7 (30%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		2 < 5*
3	6 (12%)	2.99 (0.32, 28.37)	51 (18%)	5.10 (0.58, 44.67)	22 (23%)	0.75 (0.19, 4.50)	12 (26%)	2.48 (0.21, 29.52)	2 (8.7%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		-
4	7 (14%)	0.71 (0.64, 4.13)	15 (5.4%)	1.08 (0.23, 6.81)	8 (8.2%)	0.93 (0.19, 4.50)	2 (4.3%)	1.48 (0.22, 10.13)	5 (22%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		-
Number of Comments ^b												
	<i>M</i> = 1.70; <i>SD</i> = 3.52		<i>M</i> = 1.47; <i>SD</i> = 5.35		<i>M</i> = 1.23; <i>SD</i> = 1.72		<i>M</i> = 1.17; <i>SD</i> = 1.43		<i>M</i> = 1.74; <i>SD</i> = 2.54			
1	3 (6.0%)	2.84 (0.28, 22.40)	1 (0.4%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	1 (1.0%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	0 (0%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	1 (4.3%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	X ² (12) = 16.20, <i>p</i> = .18	-
2	17 (34%)	2.48 (0.28, 22.39)	113 (41%)	5.57 (0.74, 41.99)	30 (31%)	3.95 (4.49, 31.51)	12 (26%)	11.05 (0.45, 270.43)	3 (13%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		-
3	14 (28%)	1.41 (0.32, 6.13)	97 (35%)	4.74 (1.32, 17.01)	36 (37%)	2.16 (0.52, 8.95)	22 (48%)	7.41 (0.62, 89.14)	11 (48%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		-
4	16 (32%)	3.25 (0.07, 145.89)	78 (24%)	12.51 (0.29, 533.94)	30 (31%)	11.38 (0.27, 488.65)	12 (26%)	42.11 (0.47, ****)	8 (35%)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)		-

Note. ^a1 = posts that received no comments or score; 2 = posts that received one or two comments or score; 3 = posts that received three or four comments or score; ^b4 = posts that received more than five comments or score.

^a Between-profile comparisons. Only significant pairwise chi-square tests comparisons are presented.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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