



1997

Perception of Parental Conflict as a Predictor of Attachment and Caregiving Styles in the Romantic Relationships of Young Adults

Benjamin P. Chapman '97
Illinois Wesleyan University

Recommended Citation

Chapman '97, Benjamin P., "Perception of Parental Conflict as a Predictor of Attachment and Caregiving Styles in the Romantic Relationships of Young Adults" (1997). *Honors Projects*. Paper 99.
http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/psych_honproj/99

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Running Head: PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL CONFLICT AS A PREDICTOR OF

Perceptions of Parental Conflict as a Predictor of
Attachment and Caregiving Styles in the Romantic
Relationships of Young Adults

Benjamin P. Chapman
Department of Psychology
Illinois Wesleyan University
Advised by Dr. Linda Kuncie

Abstract

Attachment styles and caregiving styles have provided a useful framework for conceptualizing romantic relationships. The present study seeks to examine whether perceptions of high parental conflict will predict less secure attachment and caregiving styles in the romantic relationships of young adults. It is hypothesized that higher perceptions of parental conflict, as measured by the Family Structure Survey and the Conflict Tactics Scale, will correlate positively with more insecure ratings on a dimensional attachment measure, and will correlate positively with maladaptive extremes of caregiving styles, measured using the Caregiving Questionnaire. Low correlations between dimensional attachment and parental conflict were found. Results are discussed in the context of a social-learning hypothesis for attachment and caregiving styles in the romantic relationships of young adults, with the parents' marriage being the primary model of romantic relationships.

Perceptions of Parental Conflict as a Predictor of Attachment and Caregiving Styles in the Romantic Relationships of Young Adults

Much research has been devoted to the understanding of romantic relationships (cf. Bierhoff, 1991). In particular, research on attachment styles (e.g. Hazan and Shaver, 1987) and on caregiving styles (e.g. Kuncze and Shaver, 1994) has provided a viable framework for conceptualizing behavior in a romantic relationship (Bierhoff, 1991). In addition, it has been suggested that different romantic relational attitudes may be acquired through a process akin to social learning (Greenberg and Nay, 1982), and parental conflict has been related to more negative perceptions of marriage and romantic relationships in offspring (Kozuch and Cooney, 1995; Landis-Kleine, Foley, Nall, Padget, & Walters-Palmer, 1995). Parental conflict has also been linked to less secure attachment styles in offspring (Brennan and Shaver, 1993; Deaton, 1990). Less secure attachment styles in parents have been found to transmit to offspring as well (Benoit and Parker, 1994; Bretherton, 1990), and insecure attachment in parents has also been proposed to account for some portion of marital conflict (Brennan and Shaver, 1993).

The broader purpose of the present study is to examine whether conflicted romantic relationships in one's parents will predict conflicted romantic relationships in one's own young adulthood. The attachment system, and its complement the caregiving system, have both been of use in the conceptualization and empirical investigation of young adult romantic styles (Bierhoff, 1991). In fact, attachment theory has been found to be quite applicable to the study of romantic relationship behavior (Shaver and Hazan, 1988). Additionally, though current evidence is not sufficient to unequivocally explain inter-generational transmission of attachment styles, social learning theory seems to be a plausible explanation for this phenomenon (cf. Bretherton, 1990).

The present study seeks to examine the question of whether perceptions of parents' marital conflict will predict different attachment and caregiving styles in young adult

romantic relationships, through the inferred mechanism of social learning in families. The following review will successively examine the relevant literature in attachment style and caregiving in romantic relationships, effects of parental conflict on offspring, and finally social learning of relationship styles.

Attachment Styles

Attachment styles are internal working models of one's self, one's environment, and of others, that collectively influence behavior in interpersonal relationships (Ainsworth, Bowlby, 1969/1982). Attachment styles vary in levels and types of security, in degrees of confidence in the stability of relationships, and in one's personal efficacy to form meaningful relationships. The three original and prevalent styles of attachment are secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant (Ainsworth, 1978), and the theory was first postulated for infants (Bowlby, 1969). A fourth typology was later proposed for adults (Bartholemew and Horowitz, 1991), comprised of four discrete categories: secure, preoccupied, dismissing avoidant, and fearful avoidant.

Persons with a secure attachment style typically have a stable and positive internal representation of themselves and others. They consider themselves likable, efficacious, and are comfortable in close relationships. They behave are empathic, confident, and assertive in close relationships.

The anxious-ambivalent style, which has also been labeled "preoccupied," relates to nervousness and "clingy" behavior in close relationships, because people of preoccupied attachment style fear desertion and are typically not convinced that their relationship partners will "be there" for them.

The anxious-avoidant style is better understood after its expansion into the fearful avoidant and dismissing avoidant categories. Dismissing avoidant people do not engage in close relationships, and feel no need or desire to forge close bonds with others. They are typically unconcerned with intimate relationships, and content to have few or none.

Fearful avoidant people, by contrast, desire closeness with others, but do not permit themselves to develop intimate relationships. In this sense, they avoid intimacy at all costs not because it is unimportant to them, as in the dismissing avoidant type, but because they have an extreme fear of desertion, abandonment, or perhaps intimacy itself.

It has long been posited that attachment styles are the result of one's relationship with one's primary caregiver, particularly during the first two years of life: a stable, consistently nurturing relationship will lead to a secure attachment, whereas sporadic or inconsistent, or even absent amounts of nurturing care will lead to anxious-ambivalence and avoidance, respectively (Bowlby, 1969). In original infant attachment theory, this interaction between infant and primary caregiver was thought to formulate a relatively ingrained attachment style, that persisted throughout one's life. Thus, adult attachment style was first conceived to be the product of infantile reactions to a primary caregiver's nurturing behavior.

However, it has also been suggested that attachment styles can be socially learned (Benoit and Parker, 1994; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Greenberg and Nay, 1982) during later childhood and adolescence. (Bandura, 1977). In accordance with principles of social learning, parental role-modeling of important behaviors has been proposed to play a powerful role in the development of offspring attachment styles (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). Thus, there appears to be two possible routes through which attachment style is developed: an initial conditioning process related to the nurturing behaviors of a primary caregiver during the first few years of life (Bowlby, 1969), and later childhood and adolescent observation of parental behaviors as one's parents interact with others (Benoit and Parker, 1994; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Greenberg and Nay, 1982).

It also has been asserted that one's overall attachment style generalizes to almost all aspects of one's interpersonal dealings (e.g., Bretherton, 1990). For this reason, attachment styles have been effective in conceptualizing behaviors in romantic relationships (Kunze and Shaver, 1994). Indeed, it has been found that persons of different attachment

styles process events in a romantic relationship in much different fashions (Baldwin et al., 1993). For example, ambiguous dating situations are typically perceived by secure individuals in a healthy, positive manner, whereas individuals of insecure attachment typically viewed the same ambiguous situations in a significantly more negative and uncomfortable light (Baldwin et al., 1993).

It has also been found that attachment styles can be transmitted across generations. The mechanism of social learning/parental role modeling may be responsible for this phenomena (Benoit and Parker, 1994; Bretherton, 1990; Latty-Mann, 1991). In particular, attachment styles were significantly more *insecure* in a sample of children of insecure alcoholics than in a control group (Latty Mann, 1991). This allows for the idea that attachment style, in addition to developing during the first few years of life as a reaction to the nurturing of a primary caregiver, is also in part acquired through a later observation or modeling process that can be explained by social learning theory. We will further examine this idea in the section on the interface of social learning and attachment style/romantic behaviors.

Caregiving Styles

Caregiving behavior can be conceptualized as the complementary process to attachment behavior (Kunce and Shaver, 1994). It involves providing nurturance for another in a close relationship rather than seeking it (Kunce and Shaver, 1994).

Kunce and Shaver identified four continua of caregiving behavior: proximity vs. distance, sensitivity vs. insensitivity, cooperation vs. control, and compulsive caregiving. These dimensions measure the aspects of caregiving behavior suggested by their names: the availability of one to one's partner for proximity vs. distance; the awareness to one's partner's cues for care, for the sensitivity vs. insensitivity index; the degree to which one provides a supportive base or tries to control one's partner's problems for the cooperation vs. control continuum; and the degree to which one provides smothering, unwanted caregiving, measured by the compulsive caregiving construct.

Different caregiving styles have been successfully correlated to different dimensions of attachment (Kunze and Shaver, 1994). Secure people are typically accessible and sensitive to their partner, and provide a solid base of support while allowing their partner necessary space and freedom. Dismissing avoidant people are typically less accessible and less sensitive to their partner's needs. Preoccupied people are quite accessible and sensitive to their partners, but tend to be compulsive caregivers and to "smother" their partners with unwanted caregiving. Fearfully avoidant people's caregiving behavior is compulsive and characterized by role reversal, though it is also typically inconsistent and difficult to predict.

Parental Conflict

Not surprisingly, parental conflict is known to have a variety of detrimental impacts on children (Buehler et al., 1994; Fincham and Osborne, 1993; Grych and Fincham, 1990; Fincham et al., 1994). The marital dyad is considered by structural family therapists to be the most important subsystem within a family (Lopez, 1986), suggesting that a conflicted marriage between one's parents produces a variety of difficulties for offspring. Variations reported in the strength of the correlation between parental conflict and child maladjustment are probably due to slight variations in operationally defining the construct of parental conflict (Fincham & Osborn, 1993). Marital conflict has been found to predict child problems better than the more ambiguous construct of "marital satisfaction" (Fincham & Osborn, 1993). Issues of differential constructs aside, it has been generally agreed upon after Emery's (1982) seminal investigation that parental conflict predicts maladaptive behaviors and cognitions in children (e.g. Grych and Fincham, 1990).

Parental conflict can best be conceived of as a multi-modal construct that varies along a number of axes (Fincham & Osborn, 1993). Four consistently agreed upon dimensions of parental conflict include frequency (the number of times conflict occurs in a given period); intensity (the degree of emotionality and severity of expression characterizing the conflict); content (the specific topic and semantics comprising the conflict); and resolution (the extent to which disagreements are peacefully and satisfactorily

dealt with) (Grych and Fincham, 1990; Fincham et al., 1994). In some reviewers' conceptualizations, two additional aspects of conflict also seem useful in operationalizing parental clashes: Mode of expression (screaming, silence, or other mediums through which conflict can occur) and child involvement (the degree to which the child is involved either immediately in the conflict or is the topic of the conflict) (Fincham & Osborn, 1993).

Regarding the negative correlates of these dimensions of conflict, it has been proposed that different aspects of conflict may predict different adjustment problems in children, although specific connections are still tentative (Fincham & Osborn, 1993). In general, conflict that is aggressive, hostile, and child focused seems to be the worst constellation of dimensions in predicting child maladjustment (Buehler, et al. 1994; Fincham et al., 1994). Specifically, the degree to which the conflict is resolved seems to be a singly important factor in determining long-lasting effects (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Fincham et al. 1994).

Parental conflict has been noted to predict a wide variety of problems in offspring. These include externalizing disorders, especially Conduct Disorder and heightened aggression (Fincham et al., 1994; Buehler et al., 1994); internalizing disorders, particularly anxiety and depression (Fincham et al. 1994; Fincham & Osborn, 1993); poorer adjustment to familial separation in college students (Lopez et al., 1989); teacher rated deficits in social and cognitive competence (Long & O'Leary, 1987, Wierson, Forehand & McCombs, 1988, cited in Grych & Fincham, 1990); and poor regulation of emotion and affect (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Fincham et al. 1994).

Poor emotional management skills themselves negatively impact one's interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1995). These emotional self-management deficits have been theorized to facilitate insecure attachment styles (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Deaton, 1990) in offspring witnessing parental conflict. The section on social learning below will examine this putative link, and this study will seek to test the specific hypothesis that

parent's marital conflict in particular leads to insecure attachment in the specific domain of romantic relationships in offspring.

The Interface of Social Learning and Attachment/Romantic Behavior

There is some evidence to suggest that young adults' attitude about romantic relationships are influenced by the specific nature and dynamics of their parents' marriage (Kozuch and Cooney, 1995), particularly by levels of parental conflict (Deaton, 1990; Kozuch & Cooney, 1995; Landis-Kleine et al., 1995). For instance, it has been hypothesized that children exposed to frequent fighting and conflict between parents are likely to adopt a negative concept of marriage (Kozuch & Cooney, 1995). Relatedly, Landis (1962, cited in Greenberg and Nay, 1982) found that college students whose parents' marriage was happy started dating earlier and dated more frequently than those whose parents marriage was unhappy. It also seems that exposure to conflict is a stronger predictor of negative attitudes about marriage than is actual divorce (Landis-Kleine et al., 1995), and is also a more powerful predictor of general attachment style than the discrete variable of divorce (Brennan & Shaver, 1993).

Thus, it appears that the intergenerational transmission of attachment styles (Benoit & Parker, 1994; Bretherton, 1990; Latty Mann, 1990) may well be due to, or is at least correlated with, similar attachment styles in one's family of origin (Deaton, 1990; Shealy, 1991). Bretherton (1990) proposed a specific explanation positing that unresolved insecurities on the part of parents inadvertently disrupted the formation of early secure attachments, but such a link seems largely speculative. A more simple parent-to-child model involving basic social learning has also been hypothesized (Benoit & Parker, 1994; Greenberg and Nay, 1982).

Brennan and Shaver (1993) develop the parent to child model further by postulating a mechanism whereby insecure parents exert a negative effect on their own marriage,

leading to conflict, which in turn leads to diminished security within the offspring. This compromised sense of attachment in the offspring then ultimately leads them to unstable romantic relationships of their own.

A similar specific mechanism of transmitting insecure attachment from parent to child has been delineated by Davies and Cummings (1994). Building again on basic social learning theory, they posit that children who witness parental conflict suffer a lack of basic emotional security. This lack of emotional security is accompanied by significantly more negative and less stable internal representations of the self and others after witnessing repeated parental conflict, as well as a heightened sensitivity to conflict and decreased ability to regulate emotional arousal. Also, poor relationship strategies are learned through modeling the parents' dysfunctional interactions, echoing Kozuch and Cooney's (1995) hypothesis that children gain negative impressions of romantic relationships vicariously. The end result of these problems is an insecure attachment style, which, given the pervasive effect attachment style has on interpersonal perceptions (Bretherton, 1990), and love relationships (Kunze and Shaver, 1994; Shaver and Hazan, 1988), leads to insecurity in young adult romance. Presumably, the transmission of attachment styles is both an infant conditioning process, and a later modeling process explained by social learning, whereby children develop strategies for relationships by observing those displayed by their parents.

Current Study and Research Hypotheses

The aim of the present study is to systematically examine the relation between the variables of perceived parental conflict, and attachment/caregiving style. The work of Shaver and Hazan (1988), and Kunze and Shaver (1994), linking attachment and caregiving styles, respectively, to romantic behaviors will also be utilized to provide a framework for the empirical study of romantic relationships. In conceptualizing how perceptions of parents' marital conflict might lead to the formation of insecure attachments in young adult romantic relationships, Brennan and Shaver's (1993) and Davies and

Cummings' (1994) theoretical framework on mechanisms of intergenerational attachment style transmission will serve as a conceptual basis. It was hypothesized that both past and current perceptions of parental conflict would predict both attachment and caregiving styles in the romantic relationships of young adults. Specifically, we hypothesized that greater perceptions of past and present conflict would relate to more insecure attachment styles, and more maladaptive caregiving patterns.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were 94 college students at a small midwestern university. They ranged in age between 18 and 22 years, with a mean age of 19.72. Approximately 34% of the sample was male and 65% female. Forty-three percent were currently involved in a romantic relationship, with an average duration of that relationship of 18 months. Of the sample, 23.4% had parents who were divorced. Only about 3.2% of the sample had absolutely no dating experience.

Students were recruited from three large lecture sections. In one class, extra credit was awarded for the students' participation; participation by all students was completely voluntary.

Measures

Each survey packet contained basic demographic questions, followed by a question assessing the participants' parents' marital status. All subsequent measures were randomly counterbalanced, to control for fatigue effects and other artifacts of the measurement B for a complete list of the specific measures.

Included in the survey packet was Bartholomew and Horowitz' (1991) four category discrete attachment measure, asking students to classify their relationships style according to one of four profiles: secure, preoccupied, dismissing avoidant, and fearful avoidant. It has been demonstrated to have good internal reliability and criterion validity

(Bartholemew and Horowitz, 1991; Kunce and Shaver, 1994). This was supplemented by a dimensional attachment measure (Shaver, in press), which provides a series of questions that yielded both an anxious/preoccupied subscale score, as well as an avoidant subscale score. This measure has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Shaver, in press).

The packet also contained the Marital Conflict subscale of the Family Structure Survey (FSS) (Lopez, 1986). The Marital Conflict subscale assesses perceptions of one's parents' marital conflict, and has high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=.90$), as assessed by a sample of 255 college undergraduates from intact families (Lopez, personal communication; Lopez et al., 1989; Lopez, 1986b).

Also in the packet was the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Strauss, 1985). This measure is designed to assess three substyles of parental interaction, each with a separate subscale: verbal reasoning, verbal conflict, and physical conflict.. Average to high internal consistency has been reported for all subscales (Touliatos, Perlmatter, & Strauss, 1990) of the most recent form, with alpha coefficients ranging from .42 to .88 (Strauss, 1985). The CTS factor structure has been confirmed by six of eight studies (Touliatos et al., 1990), and concurrent validity correlations between husbands and wives and parents and children average an acceptable .4 (Touliatos et al., 1990)..

The packet also contained a measure designed to assess caregiving behaviors, the Caregiving Questionnaire (used by Kunce and Shaver, 1994). Questions in this part of the packet ask respondents to reply on a six-point likert scale how characteristic a given behavior is of them. The Caregiving Questionnaire provides information about four aspects of caregiving, each with a respective subscale: proximity vs. distance ($\alpha=.83$), sensitivity vs. insensitivity ($\alpha=.83$), cooperation vs. control ($\alpha=.87$), and compulsive caregiving ($\alpha=.80$) (Kunce and Shaver, 1994).

A discrete question identical to the one used by Greenberg and Nay (1982) was included to assess the respondents' overall perceptions of the happiness of their parent's marriage. The item asks respondents, "In general, to the best of your recollection, were

your parents happy or unhappy in their marriage?" Responses are to be given on a seven point likert scale. In addition to this question, three others were modeled after it, one designed to assess each of the following aspects: frequency of conflict, severity conflict, and degree of resolution of the conflict. In various reviews of parental conflict literature, these three aspects of conflict have consistently been related to adjustment of offspring (Fincham et al., 1994; Grych and Fincham, 1990).

Finally, the Marlow-Crowne Scale of Social Desirability was included in the packet. This measure has been used to assess respondents' tendencies to deliver the socially desirable response to questions, which is often not the most accurate one. The Marlow-Crowne is a frequently used and well-reputed measure of social desirability, and has a high internal consistency. Thus, this scale will allow us to identify, at least to a degree, social desirability response biases: a respondent with a score high on social desirability may be more prone to portray themselves in a less accurate, more positive light. All correlations included a partialing out of the Marlow Crowne scores, to see if relationships between variables remain when social desirability has been controlled for.

Procedures

The researcher walked into each classroom to be sampled at a time convenient for the professor of the class, handed out surveys to interested participants, and outlined informed consent information and the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study

Completed questionnaires were then given individual identification numbers, and the measures in each survey were then reordered according to a codebook devised by the researcher, for ease of data entry. The data was then entered into a file on the SPSS statistical package for windows.

Results

Scores were calculated for all measures of parental conflict and attachment and caregiving. A total of 48 correlations were run between parental conflict measures and attachment and caregiving measures (see Table 2). Pearson r scores are reported for

correlations between interval scale data. Correlations performed between ordinal and interval scale data are reported with Spearman rho coefficients. Statistically significant relationships were observed in six of these fort-eight correlations with trends observed in an additional six:

Dimensional Attachment Scores and Measures of Past Parental Conflict

Three of seven possible scores of past parental conflict measures related significantly to dimensional scores of attachment anxiety, and an additional one of seven showed a trend relationship.

Scores on the anxiety subscale of the dimensional attachment measure related to scores on the verbal conflict subscale of the CTS, $r(70) = .20$, $p < .05$ after the Marlow-Crowne was controlled for; and scores on the attachment anxiety subscale were also related to scores on the single item of parents' marital satisfaction: $r_s(88) = .22$, $p < .05$; to scores on the single item of conflict frequency: $r_s(88) = .22$, $p < .05$; and, on a trend level to scores on the single item of conflict resolution: $r_s(88) = .17$, $p = .06$.

One of seven possible scores of past parental conflict measure related significantly to dimensional scores of attachment avoidance, and an additional three of seven parental conflict measures related at a trend level to dimensional attachment avoidance.

Scores on the avoidant subscale of the dimensional attachment related significantly to scores on the single item of parental conflict resolution: $r_s(88) = .24$, $p < .05$; and at a trend level to scores on the single item of parents' marital satisfaction: $r_s(88) = .17$, $p = .06$; the single item of parental conflict frequency: $r_s(88) = .17$, $p = .06$; and the single item of parental conflict severity: $r_s(88) = .24$, $p < .07$.

Dimensional Attachment and Current Parental Conflict

Scores on the anxiety subscale of the dimensional attachment measure related significantly to scores on the marital conflict subscale of the FSS, which measures perceptions of currently occurring parental conflict: $r(79) = .24$, $p < .05$. Scores on the avoidance subscale of the dimensional attachment measure also related significantly to

scores on the marital conflict subscale of the FSS: $r(79) = .25, p < .05$. The Marlow-Crowne was controlled for in both of these correlations.

Discrete Attachment and Parental Conflict

Four separate one-way Analyses of Variances (ANOVAs) were run using discrete attachment style classifications as the independent variable in each, and physical conflict, verbal conflict, verbal reasoning subscale scores, and FSS scores, respectively, as the dependent variables. Subjects were collapsed across gender to avoid excessively small cell size; and because the four dependent variables were conceptually inter-related, as well as constituent subscales of one overall measure (for the CTS subscales), a Bonferroni correction was implemented, placing the alpha level at $p < .0125$. However, none of the three ANOVAs yielded a significant overall F score, with or without the Bonferroni correction.

Caregiving Styles and Parental Conflict

No significant correlations were found between any of the caregiving subscales and any of the parental conflict measures. The proximity vs. distance subscale of the caregiving questionnaire showed a trend-level relationship with the marital conflict subscale of the FSS (a measure of current perceptions of parental conflict): $r(81) = .16, p < .08$. The sensitivity vs. insensitivity subscale related at a trend level with the single item of parental conflict resolution: $r_s(90) = .14, p < .10$.

Concurrent Validity of Parental Conflict Measures

The measures of parental conflict showed substantial concurrent validity. For instance, the verbal conflict subscale of the CTS correlated strongly with the marital conflict subscale of the FSS, $r(77) = .68, p < .001$, and the marital conflict subscale of the FSS also correlated well with the physical conflict subscale of the CTS: $r(77) = .54, p < .001$. The marital conflict subscale of the FSS also correlated very strongly with all single item conflict measures: $r_s(81) = .78, p < .001$ for the item of parents' marital satisfaction; rho

(81)=.70, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict frequency; $r_s(81) = .62$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict severity; and $r_s(81) = .74$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict resolution. The verbal conflict subscale of the CTS correlated significantly with all four since item conflict measures: $r_s(83) = .58$, $p < .001$ for the item of marital satisfaction; $r_s(83) = .60$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict frequency; $r_s(83) = .62$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict severity; and $r_s(83) = .67$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict resolution. Finally, the physical conflict subscale of the CTS correlated well with all single item measures: $r_s(81) = .45$, $p < .001$ for the marital satisfaction item; $r_s(81) = .50$, $p < .001$ for the conflict frequency item; $r_s(81) = .60$, $p < .001$ for the conflict severity item; and $r_s(81) = .57$, $p < .001$ for the item of conflict resolution. (For a summary table of correlations between parental conflict measures, see table 3.)

Additional Analyses: Divorce, Dating, and Attachment

Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant relationship between participants from divorced and non-divorced homes on variables of dating experience or attachment anxiety. However, participants whose parents were divorced exhibited a trend of higher scores on the dimensional measure of attachment avoidance, $t(88) = 1.57$, $p < .06$, ($M = 3.1$, $SD = .8$) than participants whose parents did not divorce ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.2$).

A one-way ANOVA comparing discrete attachment styles on the variable of dating experience yielded a significant overall F score: $F(3,76) = 2.9$, $p < .05$. Post-hoc Tukey B analyses found that a difference at the $p < .05$ level emerged between the secure and fearful group, such that the secure group mean dating experience ($M = 36$, $SD = 5.3$) was significantly higher than the fearful group's mean dating experience ($M = 22$, $SD = 8.1$).

Discussion

The authors forwarded hypotheses that both past and present perceptions of parental conflict would predict both attachment and caregiving styles in the romantic

The authors forwarded hypotheses that both past and present perceptions of parental conflict would predict both attachment and caregiving styles in the romantic relationships of young adults. The results tentatively supported a portion of the hypotheses, namely those dealing with attachment style prediction. Little overall relationship was observed between either past or present perceptions of parental conflict and students' caregiving styles.

But while relationships between past and present parental conflict and caregiving were inconsistent and weak, a more consistent and slightly stronger pattern of results indicated that past and present perceptions of parental conflict may have a more pronounced relation to participants' attachment characteristics.

Participants who witnessed more verbal conflict growing up exhibited more attachment anxiety, as evidenced by the positive correlation between these two measures. Correlations also suggest that perceptions of less overall marital satisfaction, more frequent, and to a lesser extent, less resolved parental conflict, all related to higher reports of participants' attachment anxiety. And finally, perceptions of parental discord occurring in the present also predicted higher attachment anxiety. In totality, this array of results suggests that attachment anxiety, typically manifested in worries about abandonment and not being adequately loved or cared for, seems to increase as a number of variables of parental conflict increase. This relationship appears to hold true for both past parental conflict and parental conflict that is occurring presently.

In a related vein, participants who perceived less satisfaction in their parents' marriage, more frequent conflict, more severe conflict, and worse resolution of parental conflict when growing up also seemed to exhibit more attachment avoidance, as evidenced by the correlations between these variables. Participants who reported less happiness presently in their parents' marriage also seemed to experience more attachment avoidance. Attachment avoidance typically manifests itself in unwillingness to grow close to one's partner in an intimate relationship. This avoidant behavior in romantic relationships seemed

to be related to both past and present perceptions of parental conflict. Note that the relationship between past conflict and attachment avoidance were slightly weaker, as the statistical magnitude of the correlations between severity, conflict frequency, and marital satisfaction, and the variable of dimensional attachment avoidance, were only trends.

Note that the relative magnitude of the all these correlations was somewhat low. Therefore, while these results are encouraging and provide a modicum of support for our hypotheses, caution is warranted in the interpretation of these correlations. Conversely, the relatively strong correlations between parental conflict measures suggests that generally, the battery of instruments used to assess perceptions of parental conflict was methodologically sound in that it displayed good concurrent validity.

A few interesting ancillary findings also emerged. The variable of divorce showed a trend-level relationship to attachment avoidance; participants with divorced parents seemed slightly more avoidant than those with non-divorced parents. Another noteworthy finding was the large difference in dating experience between people of secure attachment and those of fearfully avoidant attachment. As fearfully avoidant people theoretically avoid close relationships, their considerably lesser dating experience, compared to secure people, is not surprising. The statistical magnitude of this difference was considerable, and suggests that there is a definite relation of (at least) the fearfully avoidant attachment style to dating involvement.

The main findings of this study support the results of Brennan and Shaver (1993), who found that parental conflict (theoretically independent of divorce) predicted participants' attachment style. While Brennan and Shaver measured attachment style with an item that classified participants into one of three categories (similar to Bartholemew and Horowitz, 1991, but without the fearful avoidant category), dimensional measures of attachment measure the same constructs, but in a different and possibly more sensitive way. Thus, the difference in attachment style measurement should have little effect on the comparison of these results to those of Brennan and Shaver.

These findings are also consistent with parental conflict literature in general, which has shown an array of difficulties, including interpersonal problems, in the offspring of conflicted marriages (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Kozuch & Cooney, 1995). Our results also support the findings that specific dimensions of conflict—severity, frequency, and degree of resolution (Beuhler et al., 1990; Fincham & Osborn, 1993; Grych & Fincham, 1990) seem to be related to less adaptive characteristics in offspring. In this study, the variable of perceived parental marital satisfaction also related to offspring attachment avoidance and anxiety. This is interesting, in that other researchers have suggested a strong distinction between the constructs of marital satisfaction and marital conflict, and have typically found marital conflict to be a better predictor of maladaptive behaviors in offspring (Fincham and Osborn, 1993). However in this study, a measure of parental satisfaction predicted attachment avoidance and anxiety as well as various other measurements specifically designed to examine parental conflict.

The relationship between past and present parental conflict and attachment avoidance and anxiety is perhaps best explained by social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Bretherton (1990) and Benoit and Parker (1994) both noted the intergenerational transmission of attachment styles, and consistent with Bowlby's (1969) early work, speculated that attachment styles are passed on from parent to child in one manner or another. How this occurs is still quite speculative, but Davies and Cummings (1994) have posited an explanation involving social learning as well.

It seems plausible that children's primary model of male-female relationships is their parents' marriage. If, as Bandura (1977) theorizes, children learn behavior from the observation of respected role models, then the development of dysfunctional relationship behavior and attitudes, in the form of attachment anxiety and avoidance, would be an obvious consequent of observing role models in substantial conflict.

Attachment style itself is a mental construct that involves internal representations of oneself and others in the context of close relationships. As newer social learning

approaches deals with the cognitions and schema underlying behavior, one can easily argue that the internal representations of attachment theory are the impetus for insecure attachment behavior. In positing social learning theory as an explanation for the results observed in this study, one must necessarily assume that the attitudes and perceptions behind overt behavior are also products of the social learning process. Such an assumption seems necessary in all but the most radically behaviorist interpretations of social learning, and social learning or closely related concepts seem indeed to be the best explanation available at this time for the relationships observed between parental behavior in marriage and offspring behavior in their own romantic relationships. However, the fact that the correlations found in this study were relatively low mitigates the certainty of even the best explanations available.

While this study did yield a pattern of statistically significant relationships between various parental conflict measures and attachment anxiety and avoidance, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these findings. When the Pearson r values of the correlations are squared these statistically significant relationships actually explain a very small portion of variance within the sample.

The sample itself was non-representative, in that only about 23% had parents who were divorced. A disproportionately small section of the sample (less than 5%) had parents who had engaged in serious physical conflict. In particular, these sampling characteristics invite speculations of a truncated range on parental conflict measures. Of course, the sample itself was between 18 and 22, limiting the generalizability of results to other age brackets.

Additionally, socially desirable response bias was controlled for in only a limited number of correlations (see Table 2). Also, a plethora of intervening variables and confounds exist. These include retrospective recall bias, the identification by participants of researcher demand characteristics, the possible impact of therapy and social support networks upon participants, and the difficulty in separating the effects of divorce from the

effects of parental conflict per se. In totality, these factors make the relationship between parental conflict and young adult attachment and caregiving style difficult to definitively isolate for empirical investigation.

Ultimately, the study did benefit from a limited control for social desirability and from generally good concurrent validity between the various measures of parental conflict. However, future research might improve on this work by devising controls for the multitude of confounds, examining the effects of intervening variables through a path analysis, using a larger and more heterogeneous sample, and devising a measure to assess role-modeling in an effort to examine the theory of how parental conflict may relate to young adult attachment style.

References

- Ainsworth, M. D., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1987). Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Baldwin, M.W., Fehr, B., Keedian, E., Seidel, M., Thomson, D.W. (1995). An exploration of the relational schemata underlying attachment styles: self-report and lexical decision approaches. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 19, 746-754.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Benoit, D. and Parker, K.C. (1994). Stability of attachment across three generations. Child Development 65, 1444-1456.
- Bierhoff, Hans Werner. (1991). Twenty years of research on love: theory, results, and prospects for the future. The German Journal of Psychology, 15, 95-117.
- Bowlby, J. (1969/1982). Attachment and loss: Vol. I Attachment (2nd ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Brennan, K.A., and Shaver, P.R. (1993). Attachment styles and parental divorce. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 21, 161-175.
- Bretherton, I. (1990). Communication patterns, internal working models, and the intergenerational transmission of attachment relationships. Infant Mental Health Journal, 11, 237-252.
- Buehler, C., Krishnakumar, A., Anthony, C., Tittsworth, S., and Stone, G. Hostile interparental conflict and youth maladjustment. Family Relations, 43, 409-416.
- Byng-Hall, J. (1990). Attachment theory and family therapy: a clinical view. Infant Mental Health Journal, 11, 228-236.
- Davies, P.T., and Cummings, E.M. (1994). Marital conflict and child adjustment: an emotional security hypothesis. Psychological Bulletin, 116, 387-411.

Deaton, L.H. (1990). Early life predictors of adult attachment style: the role of parental conflict and marital disruption (Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Dakota). Dissertation Abstracts International, 49, 25003.

Fincham, F.D., and Osborne, L.N. (1993). Marital conflict and children: retrospect and prospect. Clinical Psychology Review, 13, 75-88.

Fincham, F.D., Grych, J.H., and Osborn, L.N. (1994). Does marital conflict cause child maladjustment? Directions and challenges for longitudinal research. Journal of Family Psychology, 8, 128-140.

Greenberg, E.F., and Nay, R.W. (1982). The intergenerational transmission of marital instability reconsidered. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 335-347.

Grych, J.H., and Fincham, F.D. (1990). Marital conflict and children's adjustment: a cognitive-contextual framework. Psychological Bulletin, 108, 267-290.

Kennedy, M.E. and Donaldson, G.A. (1991). Contributions of parental attachment and family structure to the social and psychological functioning of first year college students. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 38, 479-486.

Kozuch, P., and Cooney, T.M. (1995). Young adults' marital and family attitudes: the role of recent parental divorce, and family and parental conflict. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 23, 45-66.

Kunce, L.J. and Shaver, P. (1994). An attachment-theoretical approach to caregiving in romantic relationships. In K. Bartholmew & D. Pearlman (Eds.), Advances in Personal Relationships, Vol.5: Attachment processes in adulthood (pp.205-237). London, England: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Ltd.

Landis-Kleine, C., Foley, L.A., Nall, L., Padgett, P., and Walters-Palmer, L. (1995). Attitudes toward marriage and divorce held by young adults. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 23, 63-74.

Lopez, F.E. (1986). Family structure and depression: implications for the counseling of depressed college students. Journal of Counseling and Development, 64, 508-511.

Lopez, F.L., Campbel, V.L., and Watkins, C.E. (1989). Effects of marital conflict and family coalition patterns on college student adjustment. Journal of College Student Development, 30, 46-52.

Lopez, F.L., Campbel, V.L., and Watkins, C.E. (1988). Family structure, psychological separation, and college adjustment: a canonical analysis and cross-validation. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 35, 402-409.

Latty-Mann, H. (1991). An intergenerational approach to studying the influence of family of origin dynamics on the etiology of adult romantic attachment styles--with a special focus on adult children of alcoholics (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kentucky, Bowling Green). Dissertation Abstracts International, 50, 10067.

Long, B.H. (1987). Perceptions of parental discord and parental separations in the united states: effects on daughters' attitudes toward marriage and courtship progress. The Journal of Social Psychology, 12, 573-582.

Mikuliner, M. and Orbach, I. (1995). Attachment styles and repressive defensiveness: the accessibility and architecture of affective memories. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68, 917-925.

Shealy, J.S. (1991). Early family history, interpersonal attachment style, and response to information on dysfunctional family systems: an experimental intervention targeting single college women (Doctoral Dissertation, Brigham Young University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 50, 40556.

Todorski, J. (1995). Attachment and divorce: a therapeutic view. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 22, 189-804.

Appendix A: Figures

Table 1:

Sample Measures and Items used in Survey:

-
- >Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale
"I am always careful about my manner of dress."
- >Dimensional Attachment Inventory (Shaver, in development):
- Anxious Attachment Subscale:
"I often wish my partner's feelings were as strong for me as my feelings were for him/her." (High anxiety question)
"I do not often worry about being abandoned." (Low anxiety question)
- Avoidant Attachment Subscale:
"I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back." (High avoidance question)
"I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner." (Low avoidance question)
- >Conflict Tactics Scale (Strauss, 1985):
- Verbal Reasoning Subscale
"[How many times have your parents] discussed the issue calmly?"
- Verbal Conflict Subscale:
"[How many times have your parents] insulted or swore at one another?"
- Physical Conflict Subscale
"[How many times have your parents] threatened one another with a knife or gun?"
- >Based on an item from Greenberg and Nay (1982), three similar items measuring frequency of parental conflict, severity of parental conflict, and degree of resolution of parental conflict (developed for this study).
"In general, to the best of your recollection, how often did your parents argue (not just disagree)?"
- >Family Structure Survey (Lopez, 1986)
- Marital Conflict Subscale (Measures *currently occurring* marital conflict):
"I'm not sure why my parents are still together."
-

Note: See Appendix B for complete list of measures used in survey.

Table 2

Correlations Between Parental Conflict Measures and Attachment/caregiving Measures

	Dimensional Anxiety	Dimensional Avoidance	Proximity/ Distance	Sensitivity Insensitivity	Cooperation/ Control	Compulsive Caregiving
<u>Ess (Current</u>						
Marital Conflict)	.24*	.24*	-.16+	-.05	-.02	.03
<u>CTS subscales</u>						
Verbal Reasoning	.00	-.06	-.01	.12	.12	.05
Verbal Conflict	.20*	.13	-.09	.00	.04	.01
Physical Conflict	.02	.08	.00	-.04	-.07	-.07
-						
<u>Single Item Measures</u>						
Single Item Marital Satisfaction	.22*	.17+	-.08	.04	.03	.13
Single Item Conflict Frequency	.21*	.17+	-.08	.14+	.04	.06
Single Item Conflict Severity	.12	.16+	-.09	.03	.05	.02
Single Item Conflict Resolution	.16+	.23*	-.11	-.02	-.02	.05

Note: $N = 70-83$; $+ = p < .10$, $* = p < .05$; correlation coefficients above dotted line are Pearson r and have Marlow-Crowne partialled out; and below dotted line, Spearman ρ , without Marlowe-Crowne partialled out

Table 3
Concurrent Validity Correlational Matrices for Subscales and Items of Parental Conflict

	Verbal Reasoning	Verbal Conflict	Physical Conflict	FSS
Discrete Item 1: (Marital Satisfaction)	.08	.58**	.46**	.58**
Discrete Item 2: (Conflict Frequency)	.04	.60**	.51**	.70**
Discrete Item 3: (Conflict Severity)	.09	.62**	.61**	.62**
Discrete Item 4: (Conflict Resolution)	-.02	.67**	.57**	.74**
	Verbal Reasoning	Verbal Conflict	Physical Conflict	
FSS	.02	.68**	.54**	

note: n = 81-83; top table is Spearman rho, bottom table is Pearson r; ** = p < .001

Appendix B: Measures Used in Survey

General Directions: Often parents get divorced, and sometimes they remarry one or more times. Sometimes, a parent passes away. For the questions in this packet about parents, please try to provide answers based on the set of parents that you lived with *the most*. If you lived with a single parent that didn't remarry, but can remember what your parents' marriage was like, answer based on that. If you lived with a single parent who didn't remarry, and can't really recall what your parents' marriage was like, skip all questions involving parents.

BASIC QUESTIONS (Demographic variables)

General Information: Did your parents get divorced (y/n)? _____

If yes, how old were you? _____

Who did you live with as a young child (under 5)? _____

Who did you live with in gradeschool (5-12)? _____

Who did you live with in middleschool/junior high (13-15)? _____

Who did you live with in highschool (16-left home)? _____

On the line below, please briefly describe the particular parental situation that fits you the best.

 ----- (for example, "I lived with my mom and my step-dad since I was in junior high.")

Age _____ Gender _____

Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship (y/n)? _____

If so, how long? _____

Estimate the total number of months you have been involved in dating or romantic relationships since the time you were a freshman in high school:
 _____ months

Estimate the number of serious romantic relationship you have had in this time (i.e. the number of relationships you feel you've actually been in love with your partner): _____ serious relationships

CONFLICT QUESTIONNAIRE (Conflict Tactics Scale: Strauss, 1985)

Directions: No matter how well parents get along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something their spouse does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use different ways of trying to settle their differences. Following is a list of some things your parents may have done during disagreements. Please circle the number after each question that corresponds to the number of times that particular behavior may have happened between your parents in any given year, on the average, when you were growing up. If your parents were divorced or widowed sometime after your seventh grade year, try to answer the questions based on the last year they were together.

	Never	Once	Twice	3-5 Times	6-10 Times	11-20 Times	More than 20	Don't know
a. Discussed the issue calmly.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
b. Got information to back up his/her side of things.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
c. Brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
d. Insulted or swore at one another.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
e. Sulked and/or refused to talk about it.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
f. Stomped out of the room, house, or yard.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
g. cried.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
h. did something to spite the other one....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
i. threatened to hit or throw something at the other one.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
j. threw or smashed or hit something.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
k. threw something at the other one.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
l. pushed, grabbed or shoved the other one...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
m. slapped the other one.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
n. kicked, bit, or hit with a fist.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
o. hit or tried to hit with something.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
p. beat the other one up.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
q. threatened with a knife or gun.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
r. used a knife or gun....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
s. OTHER.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	X

GENERAL PARENT QUESTIONS (First question is Greenberg and Nay discrete item: Greenberg and Nay, 1982; and three similar questions developed for this study)

In general, to the best of your recollection, were your parents happy or unhappy in their marriage? Please circle a number from 1 to 7 with 1 being very happy, and 7 being very unhappy.

very happy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very unhappy

In general, to the best of your recollection, how often did your parents argue (not just disagree)? Please circle a number from 1 to 7 with 1 meaning very infrequent arguments, and 7 meaning almost constant arguments.

very infrequent arguing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 constant arguing

In general, to the best of your recollection, how severe were the arguments your parents did have? Severity may be considered how "bad" the arguments got: from very mild, verbal conflict to very severe physical conflict. Please use a number from 1 to 7 with 1 meaning very mild verbal argumentation, and 7 meaning serious physical conflicts.

mild verbal conflict 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 severe physical conflict

In general, and to the best of your recollection, when your parents did argue, how "good" were they at making up afterwards? This means to what extent did they smooth things over, reconcile, compromise, or otherwise put the argument behind them. Please use a number from 1 to 7, with 1 meaning that they almost always forgot about the argument and quickly became friends again, and 7 meaning that they almost always held grudges, hardly ever reconciled, and rarely if ever got over the arguments.

Forgot quickly and forgave 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 held bad grudges

ROMANTIC ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE (Bartholemew and Horowitz
four typology attachment item: Bartholemew and Horowitz, 1991)

Directions: This part of the questionnaire is concerned with your experiences in romantic love relationships. Read each of the four self-descriptions below and then place a check mark next to the letter (A, B, C, or D) that best describes how you feel in close relationships, especially romantic love relationships. (Note: The terms "close" and "intimate" refer to psychological or emotional closeness, not necessarily to sexual intimacy.)

- A.** It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others. I don't worry about being alone or having other not accept me.
- B.** I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
- C.** I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- D.** I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others.

Now, please rate each of the relationship styles above according to the extent to which you think each description corresponds to your personal relationship style.

	NOT AT ALL LIKE ME					VERY MUCH LIKE ME	
Style A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style B.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

GENERAL ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE (Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale: Marlow and Crowne, 19???)

Directions: Listed below are some statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Before voting, I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates. | T | F |
| 2. I am always careful about my manner of dress. | T | F |
| 3. On occasion I have doubts about my ability to succeed in life. | T | F |
| 4. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. | T | F |
| 5. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. | T | F |
| 6. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble. | T | F |
| 7. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it. | T | F |
| 8. I like to gossip at times. | T | F |
| 9. I always try to practice what I preach. | T | F |
| 10. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed, obnoxious people. | T | F |
| 11. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. | T | F |
| 12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. | T | F |
| 13. I have never felt I was punished without cause, | T | F |
| 14. I have never deliberately said something to hurt someone's feelings. | T | F |
| 15. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. | T | F |
| 16. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something. | T | F |

ROMANTIC BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE (Caregiving Questionnaire: Kunce and Shaver, 1994)

Directions: Answer the following questions based on either the romantic relationship you are currently in, or if you aren't in one, the last relationship that you have had. Please rate each question on a scale of 1 to 7 with respect to how much that behavior is "like you": for instance, a 1 for a certain question would indicate that that behavior is very much like you in a romantic relationship, whereas a seven would indicate that it is totally unlike you.

1. When my partner seems to want or need a hug, I'm glad to provide it.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. I can always tell when my partner needs comforting, even when s/he doesn't ask for it.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. When my partner is troubled or upset, I move closer to provide support or comfort.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I sometimes miss the subtle signs that show how my partner is feeling.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. I sometimes draw away from my partners attempts to get a reassuring hug from me.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. I create problems by taking on my partner's troubles as if they were my own.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. I feel comfortable holding my partner when s/he needs physical signs of support and reassurance.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. When necessary, I can say "no" to my partner's requests for help without feeling guilty.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. I sometimes push my partner away when s/he reaches out for a needed hug or kiss.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. When it's important, I take care of my own needs before I try to take care of my partner's.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. When my partner cries or is distressed, my first impulse is to hold or touch him/her.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. I always respect my partner's ability to make his/her own decisions and solve his/her own problems.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. When my partner is crying or emotionally upset, I sometimes feel like withdrawing.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. I can help my partner work out his/her problems without "taking control."
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I don't like it when my partner is needy and clings to me.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I can easily keep myself from becoming overly concerned or overly protective of my partner.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I'm very good at recognizing my partner's needs and feelings, even when they're different from my own.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I am very attentive to my partner's nonverbal signals for help and support.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I often end up telling my partner what to do when s/he is trying to make a decision.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. I help my partner without becoming overinvolved in his/her problems.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. I'm good at knowing when my partner needs my help or support and when s/he would rather handle things alone.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. When helping my partner with something, I tend to want to do things "my way."
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. When my partner tells me about a problem, I sometimes go too far in criticizing his/her own attempts to deal with it.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Too often, I don't realize when my partner is upset or worried about something.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I sometimes "miss" or "misread" my partner's signals for help and understanding.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I'm not very good at "tuning in" to my partner's needs and feelings.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I tend to get overinvolved in my partner's problems and difficulties.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I tend to be too domineering when trying to help my partner.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. I tend to take on my partner's problems--and then feel burdened by them.
Very MuchLikeMe VeryLikeme SomewhatLikeMe NotSure SomewhatUnlikeme VeryUnlikeMe TotallyUnlikeMe
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. I am always supportive of my partner's own efforts to solve his/her problems.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31. I frequently get too "wrapped up" in my partner's problems and needs.

<u>Very MuchLikeMe</u>	<u>VeryLikeme</u>	<u>SomewhatLikeMe</u>	<u>NotSure</u>	<u>SomewhatUnlikeme</u>	<u>VeryUnlikeMe</u>	<u>TotallyUnlikeMe</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

CURRENT FEELINGS ABOUT PARENTS SCALE (Marital Conflict Subscale of Family Structure Survey: Lopez, 1986)

Directions: Using the scale below, respond to each item below by indicating how true each item is of you and /or your family situation, currently--i.e. within the past year.

<u>Completely False</u>	<u>Mostly False</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Mostly True</u>	<u>Completely True</u>
1	2	3	4	5

- ___1. My parents argue a lot.
- ___2. I worry about my parents' future.
- ___3. I wonder(ed) if my parents will divorce.
- ___4. I feel secure that my parents can work out their differences.
- ___5. My parents seem to be drifting apart.
- ___6. My parents are in love with one another.
- ___7. There are matters my parents won't discuss with one another.
- ___8. My parents seem happier than they really are.
- ___9. My parents stay(ed) together for the children.
- ___10. There is tension in my parents' relationship.
- ___11. I'm not sure why my parents are together.
- ___12. My parents can handle stress.
- ___13. My parents' marriage is solid.

ROMANTIC ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE #2 (Dimensional Attachment Measure: Shaver, in development)

Instructions: The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationship. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following scale:

Disagree strongly	Neutral/Mixed	Agree Strongly
1 2 3	4 5	6 7

- ___1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down
- ___2. I worry about being abandoned
- ___3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
- ___4. I worry a lot about my relationship.
- ___5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
- ___6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
- ___7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
- ___8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
- ___9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
- ___10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
- ___11. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
- ___12. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
- ___13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
- ___14. I worry about being alone.
- ___15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
- ___16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
- ___17. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
- ___18. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
- ___19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
- ___20. Sometimes I feel that I force myself to depend on romantic partners.
- ___21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
- ___22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
- ___23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
- ___24. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry
- ___25. I tell my partner just about everything.
- ___26. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
- ___27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
- ___28. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
- ___29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
- ___30. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- ___31. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
- ___32. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- ___33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
- ___34. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
- ___35. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
- ___36. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.