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Perceiving Behaviors That "Push a Partner's Buttons": Biased and Accurate Trigger Knowledge, Attachment, and Relationship Dynamics

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PERCEIVING BEHAVIORS THAT "PUSH A PARTNER'S BUTTONS": BIASED
AND ACCURATE TRIGGER KNOWLEDGE, ATTACHMENT, AND
RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

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by

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Abstract

Two preregistered studies examined the interplay between directional bias and tracking accuracy in perceptions of relationship triggers, partner-enacted irksome or hurtful behaviors that elicit immediate negative emotions (e.g., clinginess). Study 1 identified 24 relationship triggers that the general public considered to be important for predicting relationship outcomes. Study 2 used recently developed statistical techniques to simultaneously test (a) whether partners were able to track the unique pattern of each other's triggers and (b) if they overestimated or underestimated the extent to which a given behavior irked one another. Study 2 additionally explored attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance as potential moderating influences on bias and accuracy, as well as the implications of partners' biased and accurate trigger knowledge for relationship outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, conflict management). Results revealed that partners, indeed, were able to correctly detect the pattern of each other's triggers, though they did not demonstrate directional bias. Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance moderated bias and accuracy in different ways; however, a common theme emerged such that more securely attached persons were better "trackers" and were more easily "tracked." Finally, biased and accurate trigger perceptions predicted relationship satisfaction, negotiating strategies during conflict, and overall conflict management for the partner for whom judgments were being made. Implications of these findings for theory and relationship dynamics are discussed.

Keywords

bias, accuracy, interpersonal perception, interpersonal triggers, satisfaction, conflict management, attachment, relationships, multilevel modeling

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

Findings from decades of research on romantic relationship processes have stressed the importance of the ability for romantic partners to make accurate judgments of each other (e.g., Fletcher & Kerr, 2010, 2013). Other findings, however, have demonstrated that people tend to adopt a rosy view of their romantic partners, possessing positive illusions that lead them to perceive each other in a favorable but inaccurate manner (e.g., Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). At first blush, these findings appear to present a conundrum: How can romantic partners be both accurate *and* inaccurate when perceiving each other? In truth, the two processes described above reflect two distinct forms of accuracy that are independent constructs (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010, 2013; Stern, West, & Schoenthaler, 2013; West & Kenny, 2011; see also Cronbach, 1955). To illustrate this notion, imagine that Elisabeth and William are involved in a romantic relationship. Elisabeth may know that William is kind and intelligent (a form of accuracy termed *tracking accuracy*), but Elisabeth may overestimate or underestimate precisely how kind and intelligent William actually is (a form of accuracy termed *mean-level* or *directional bias* and most often referred to as bias, Fletcher & Kerr, 2010, 2013; see also West & Kenny, 2011). It seems, then, that people can be accurate in one way, but inaccurate in another way; in other words, people can be both biased and accurate when making interpersonal judgments.

When exploring accuracy in romantic relationship judgments, what aspects of a romantic partner should be important to "get?" One domain of relationships that has important downstream effects on other relationship processes (e.g., satisfaction) is

conflict. Partners' goals and desires will not always align and, consequently, conflict is an

unavoidable part of intimate relationships (see Campbell & Stanton, 2013; Holmes &

Murray, 1996). Unsurprisingly, couples who experience frequent conflict tend to be less

happy and less likely to remain together over time (Gill, Christensen, & Fincham, 1999;

Gottman, Coan, Carrère, & Swanson, 1998). Thus, partners should be motivated to

accurately understand the interpersonal behaviors that anger each other (termed

interpersonal triggers, Friesen & Kammrath, 2011), since this could presumably

minimize the possibility of conflict occurring. Interestingly, however, because the

relatively common errors that can occur in interpersonal judgments often have

asymmetric costs (Haselton & Buss, 2000), partners may also be biased in their

perceptions of triggers, overestimating or underestimating the extent to which a given

behavior frustrates one another. In other words, it may be "safer" to assume that a partner

is triggered by behaviors to a greater extent than they are in reality, as the alternative

(failing to perceive behaviors that actually trigger the partner) may be more detrimental

for the relationship. Bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge may further be directly

associated with relationship outcomes, such as satisfaction and conflict management.

There is also reason to believe that these processes may be moderated by

individual difference variables. For example, in a potentially threatening or distressful

situation, individuals who score higher on attachment anxiety seem to have a greater

ability to infer what their partner is thinking and feeling and, conversely, individuals who

score higher on attachment avoidance tend to be less accurate in inferring their partner's

thoughts and feelings (Simpson et al., 2011). Both forms of insecure attachment tend to

be associated with more deleterious outcomes (e.g., perceiving less support or

understanding from the partner, N. L. Collins & B. C. Feeney, 2004; experiencing more conflict, Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005). Perhaps the rocky relationship outcomes of more anxiously and more avoidantly attached persons may be partially explained by accuracy and bias in trigger knowledge. More anxious individuals may be better able to accurately track the pattern of their partner's triggers, but demonstrate directional bias such that they overestimate how much different interpersonal behaviors actually trigger their partner. On the other hand, more avoidant individuals may not accurately track the pattern of their partner's triggers, as well as underestimate how much the behaviors trigger their partner. These perceptual processes may predict negative relationship outcomes (e.g., less satisfaction and unhealthy conflict management) for insecurely attached persons. Put another way, individuals scoring higher on attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance may have less happy and healthy romantic relationships because they do not fully "get" their partners.

The possible interplay between bias and accuracy in judgments of interpersonal triggers, and their capacity to influence romantic relationship outcomes has yet to be investigated systematically. Moreover, bias and accuracy processes in trigger knowledge have not been examined through the lens of attachment theory. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, was to investigate these questions in a study of romantic couples, using an advanced statistical framework for understanding bias and accuracy in interpersonal perception.

1.1 Bias and Accuracy in Interpersonal Perception

Bias and accuracy are two independent perceptual constructs, and people can be biased and/or accurate when they make judgments about themselves and others (Fletcher

& Kerr, 2010, 2013). Eastwick and colleagues (2008), for example, examined the affective forecasting error (i.e., the tendency for people to predict levels of negative or positive affect, following possible negative or positive events, that are higher than what they actually experience when the event occurs) in the context of relationship dissolution. Specifically, the researchers followed initially romantically-involved individuals for nine months; every two weeks, participants reported whether or not they were still in their relationship with their partner. If participants remained romantically involved, they reported how distressed they thought they would feel two, four, eight, and 12 weeks later if their relationship were to end in the near future. If participants experienced a breakup during the nine months of the study, they reported their actual felt distress every two weeks. Results of this longitudinal study revealed that all individuals accurately predicted how their distress would decline over time (that is, they demonstrated tracking accuracy); however, individuals significantly overestimated the level of distress they would feel as a result of relationship dissolution (that is, they exhibited the affective forecasting error in the form of positive directional bias), especially if they were very in-love with their former partner (Eastwick, Finkel, Krishnamurti, & Loewenstein, 2008). Thus, certain judgments related to romantic breakup seem to involve both bias and accuracy.

Other studies have investigated biased and accurate perceptual processes at the dyadic level. In one experiment, Lackenbauer and colleagues (2010) recruited 55 romantic couples and asked each individual to create a personal profile by providing ratings of how they felt they scored on 10 traits (e.g., affectionate); each person also created a profile for their partner based on how they felt their partner scored on the 10 traits. Participants then received feedback that ostensibly reflected the comparison

between their self-ratings on the 10 traits and their partner's judgments of them (in reality, however, the feedback was manipulated by the researchers to reflect high vs. low tracking accuracy and high vs. low positive directional bias compared to each participant's self-ratings), after which they reported how positive and intimate they believed their relationship to be. High tracking accuracy and high positive directional bias exerted unique effects on each partner's reports of relationship positivity and intimacy. Interestingly, the effects of tracking accuracy and directional bias were additive rather than interactive, suggesting that these processes may separately and jointly benefit romantic relationships (Lackenbauer, Campbell, Rubin, Fletcher, & Troister, 2010).

The independent effects of directional bias and tracking accuracy on potential and existing relationship evaluations have been documented in several other empirical investigations (e.g., Karney & Frye, 2002; Katz, Anderson, & Beach, 1997; Morling & Epstein, 1997; Sprecher, 1999). Nevertheless, an important limitation of the majority of these prior studies is that they assessed bias and accuracy separately rather than simultaneously. A meaningful benefit of testing bias and accuracy together is that the effects of one type of perceptual process can be observed while the variance of the other process is taken into account, allowing researchers to understand when directional bias, tracking accuracy, or both inform interpersonal judgments. A second limitation of previous research is that studies have implemented different measures or benchmarks in their explorations of bias and accuracy, sometimes within the same study, making it somewhat difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the interplay of bias and accuracy. In recent years, statistical procedures have been developed to address these limitations.

1.1.1 A Statistical Window into Bias and Accuracy: The Truth and Bias Model

West and Kenny (2011) developed the Truth and Bias (T&B) Model of judgment, an analytic model which allows researchers to both conceptualize and statistically test bias and accuracy in perception within dyadic relationships (e.g., romantic partners). In this model, the person making a judgment is referred to as the *perceiver*. The perceiver's judgments are compared with their *partner's* actual ratings; in other words, the "truth" corresponds to the partner's own reports.

According to the T&B Model, there are three independent effects that can be measured and analyzed in one statistical test (West & Kenny, 2011). First, *directional bias* indexes the degree to which a perceiver systematically overestimates or underestimates some truth benchmark (e.g., perceiving a partner to be triggered by some behavior to a greater or lesser extent than the partner actually is), and is represented by the intercept. Directional bias is comparable to what Fletcher and Kerr (2010, 2013) refer to as *mean-level bias*, as it is typically assessed as a mean difference between the perceiver's judgment and the partner's truth benchmark. A perceiver who systematically overestimates their partner's triggers, then, exhibits positive directional bias, and a perceiver who systematically underestimates their partner's triggers exhibits negative directional bias.

Second, the *truth force* reflects the extent to which a perceiver correctly detects changes in the truth benchmark (e.g., accurately understanding the pattern of a partner's various triggers). In essence, the truth force measures the effect of the truth benchmark on the judgment made by the perceiver, and is represented by a regression coefficient. The

truth force is comparable to what Fletcher and Kerr (2010, 2013) refer to as *tracking accuracy*, and is typically assessed as a correlation between the perceiver's judgment and the partner's truth benchmark. A perceiver who accurately identifies the pattern of triggers their partner possesses exhibits a positive truth force, or high tracking accuracy, and a perceiver who does not accurately identify the pattern of triggers their partner possesses exhibits a null truth force, or low tracking accuracy. A negative truth force suggests that the perceiver is being pushed away from the "truth" (as opposed to being pulled toward it, in the case of a positive truth force) by some likely unmeasured perceptual or other psychological process (West & Kenny, 2011).

Third, the *bias force* indexes the extent to which a perceiver projects their own ratings onto perceptions of the truth benchmark (e.g., believing that because they are triggered by a particular behavior, their partner is as well). The bias force measures the effect of the perceiver's own benchmark on the judgments made by that same perceiver, and is also represented by a regression coefficient. Thus, the bias force reflects *assumed similarity* (West & Kenny, 2011), and is typically assessed as a correlation between the perceiver's judgment and the perceiver's own benchmark. A perceiver who projects their own feelings about a triggering behavior onto their judgments of their partner's feelings about the same trigger exhibits a positive bias force, or high assumed similarity, and a perceiver who does not project their own feelings onto their judgments of their partner's feelings exhibits a null bias force, or low assumed similarity. A negative bias force indicates that the perceiver may be exhibiting assumed dissimilarity (e.g., believing that because they are triggered by a particular behavior, their partner is not). Studies that utilize the T&B Model often examine directional bias and tracking accuracy adjusting for

the effect of assumed similarity (see, e.g., West, Dovidio, & Pearson, 2014). Doing so means that the truth force (tracking accuracy) reflects *direct accuracy* (i.e., accuracy once the perceiver's own feelings are taken into account; West & Kenny, 2011; see also Dutra et al., 2014).

One of the strengths of the T&B Model is its capacity to simultaneously assess bias and accuracy. This is important when attempting to test if directional bias and tracking accuracy effects emerge when the variance for the other construct, as well as the variance associated with a person's tendency to project their own feelings (i.e., assumed similarity), is statistically controlled. Additionally, high tracking accuracy can be associated with assumed similarity, suggesting that perceivers may be more accurate when they use their own feelings as an anchor (West & Kenny, 2011). Indeed, romantic partners are often actually similar in many aspects of relationships (e.g., satisfaction, Kenny & Acitelli, 2001). In judgments of interpersonal triggers, then, it may be that partners have similar feelings about particular behaviors, and thus a perceiver who draws more strongly on the bias force (i.e., projecting their own feelings onto their judgments of their partner) may also exhibit higher tracking accuracy. It is also feasible that, when directional bias emerges, it may correlate with tracking accuracy as well. The T&B Model allows for the statistical testing of these possibilities.

The bias and accuracy literature utilizing the T&B Model has blossomed in recent years. For example, in a study of 57 romantic couples, Overall, Fletcher, and Kenny (2012) examined perceptions of partner regard during conflict discussions. They found that perceivers, in general, underestimated (i.e., demonstrated negative directional bias), but accurately tracked, their partner's regard over the course of the discussion. Moreover,

perceivers who underestimated their partner's regard were more accurate. Interestingly, analyses in the T&B Model can include moderating variables; other studies have used the T&B model to investigate how interpersonal judgments are influenced by gender (Muise, Stanton, Kim, & Impett, 2015), depressive symptoms (Overall & Hammond, 2013), and mania (Dutra et al., 2014). Bias and accuracy, as tested in the T&B Model, can also be used in turn to predict interpersonal outcomes (e.g., negative behavior toward the partner and overall relationship quality, see Hammond & Overall, 2013). At present, however, the door remains open for research examining bias and accuracy in perceptions of triggers within romantic relationships, a topic I turn my attention to next.

1.2 Interpersonal Triggers

Everyone gets irked by the behavior of other people from time to time. Nevertheless, each person has a unique constellation of specific behaviors that bother them. Elisabeth, for instance, may get annoyed when someone is overly skeptical, whereas William may be relatively unfazed when faced with skepticism. Researchers refer to interpersonal behaviors that set off immediate and strong negative feelings (e.g., frustration, anxiety) as *triggers* (Friesen & Kammrath, 2011). When a behavior triggers a person, they may or may not act on their negative feelings. Knowledge of a partner's unique pattern of interpersonal triggers is likely very important for navigating romantic relationships; for example, the more Elisabeth knows about the behaviors that trigger William, the better she will be at avoiding situations where those behaviors can arise, and the happier they will be. Alternatively, Elisabeth could use her knowledge of William's triggers for more nefarious purposes by understanding exactly which buttons to push if she wants to "get under his skin."

Friesen and Kammrath (2011) were the first to examine trigger knowledge in the context of close relationships. They asked each member of a friend pair to rate the extent to which a number of general interpersonal behaviors (e.g., when a person exhibited hard-heartedness) triggered them, in addition to the extent to which they believed the behaviors triggered their friend. The friend pairs then rated the amount of conflict they experienced in their friendship. Results revealed that friends demonstrated modest tracking accuracy (average $r = .27$) when judging each other's triggers, particularly when they scored higher on a measure indicating that they viewed their friendship as being very deep. Higher tracking accuracy in trigger knowledge was also associated with less conflict in the friendship. It seems, then, that accurate knowledge of triggers is a potentially important aspect of a close other to understand.

One limitation of Friesen and Kammrath (2011), however, is that the researchers investigated only tracking accuracy and neglected directional bias and assumed similarity. Additionally, the study involved friend pairs as opposed to romantic partners, and although people may behave similarly across different types of close relationships, romantic relationships are characterized by a special intimacy and overlap across a number of life domains (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Levinger, 1983). Indeed, compared to other social relationships, individuals tend to be harder on romantic partners (Miller, 1997) and argue with partners more (Birditt, Fingerman, & Almeida, 2005). Thus, it may be that bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge within *romantic* relationships exert unique influences on relationship outcomes. A third potential limitation of the original study exploring interpersonal triggers is that participants rated how much they felt a particular behavior triggered their friend when enacted by anyone rather than how much they felt a

particular behavior triggered their friend when they themselves enacted the behavior. It may be that partner-enacted triggering behaviors lend particular insight into the dynamics of the relationship. Lastly, in their investigation of trigger knowledge, Friesen and Kammrath (2011) explored the relation of accurate knowledge only to the amount of conflict experienced by friends. Research on interpersonal triggers, therefore, could benefit from a partner-specific investigation of bias and accuracy within romantic relationships, as well as the effects of these forces on other relationship outcomes, such as satisfaction, feelings of being understood, and conflict management strategies.

1.2.1 Directional Bias in Perceptions of Triggers

Are partners likely to overestimate or underestimate the extent to which different interpersonal behaviors trigger each other? The answer to this question may be helpfully informed by error management theory (Haselton & Buss, 2000; see also Haselton & Galperin, 2013). Error management theory was derived from signal detection theory (Green & Swets, 1966) and proposes that there are two types of errors that can occur when people make judgments about one another. A *false alarm* (i.e., a false positive) occurs when a perceiver infers that something (e.g., an object, a trait) is there when in reality it is not. On the other hand, an *incorrect rejection* (i.e., a false negative) occurs when a perceiver infers that something is not there when in reality it is. According to error management theory, there are different costs associated with false alarms and incorrect rejections that can vary across events and situations. These often asymmetric costs are thought to have led to judgment-related adaptations such that, whenever possible, individuals will avoid the more costly error. That is, individuals will commit the

less costly error, even at high frequency, since the alternative would lead to more detrimental outcomes.

When considering interpersonal triggers, both false alarms and incorrect rejections in relationship perceptions are potentially costly. A false alarm judgment (i.e., perceiving a trigger to be present when in truth it is absent) may lead the perceiver to invest energy in avoiding the potential trigger when it has no meaning for the partner. It is possible that the perceiver's avoidance behaviors may confuse or irk the partner down the road (e.g., wondering why the perceiver is "walking on eggshells" and getting annoyed by their hesitance), but it is also possible that a false alarm judgment will have no lasting effects on the relationship. In contrast, an incorrect rejection judgment (i.e., perceiving a trigger to be absent when in truth it is present) may lead the perceiver to unknowingly and frequently enact the triggering behavior, which may erode relationship satisfaction or have other deleterious effects in the short- and long-term. Thus, error management theory reasoning suggests that it might be prudent for romantic partners to slightly *over*estimate each other's triggers, since an incorrect rejection judgment is likely to be worse for the relationship. This proposition is summarized pictorially below:

		Elisabeth's Belief about William	
		Trigger Present	*Trigger Absent*
True State of William	*Trigger Present*	Correct Detection	Incorrect Rejection (more costly)
	Trigger Absent	False Alarm (less costly)	Correct Rejection

1.2.2 Tracking Accuracy in Perceptions of Triggers

Are partners likely to accurately track the specific pattern of each other's triggers? Prior research has demonstrated that people respond positively to feedback that matches self-beliefs (i.e., self-verifying feedback, see Swann, 2012). For instance, people are likely to become involved in romantic relationships with partners who accurately know them (cf. Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989) and leave relationships where their partners do not accurately know them (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). Indeed, as described previously in Section 1.1, perceivers who believe their partner accurately tracks a number of their personal traits feel greater intimacy in their relationships (Lackenbauer et al., 2010). It may be worth noting, however, that many previous studies of accuracy involve particular feedback provided by the researcher to the perceiver (e.g., they are told their partner does or does not "get" them, Lackenbauer et al., 2010), rather than an exploration of the actual extent to which partners demonstrate tracking accuracy across traits. Regardless, in order to maximize positive relationship outcomes, romantic partners should be motivated to accurately understand each other, especially in the important area of conflict-related constructs (e.g., interpersonal triggers).

1.2.3 Assumed Similarity in Perceptions of Triggers

Are partners likely to assume similarity when judging each other's triggers? Previous studies have found that romantic partners project their own feelings onto their partner when making judgments of closeness, enjoying sex in general, family life events, and relationship satisfaction (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001; Schul & Vinokur, 2000). Notably, the aforementioned aspects are likely to be similar across both partners (e.g., when Elisabeth is highly satisfied with the relationship, William is as well); in this case,

assuming similarity is likely adaptive. When aspects or events are *not* likely to be

inherently similar to some degree (e.g., job satisfaction), research suggests that projection

effects are weaker or nonexistent. Thus, people may draw on the bias force when making

judgments of triggers, since it is possible that partners in a relationship may be irked by

the same types of behaviors. Conversely, triggers may represent preferences that are

personal rather than shared by partners and, therefore, partners may not draw on the bias

force when making judgments of triggers.

An intriguing possibility not yet discussed involves the question of whether

certain types of people are better "trackers," or if certain types of people can be "tracked"

more easily (e.g., because they regularly and openly disclose their feelings to their

partner). One theoretical framework that takes into account how individuals perceive and

relate to close others is attachment theory. Individual differences in adult attachment are

thought to influence perceptual processes in distinct ways; thus, attachment may be a

meaningful moderating variable when it comes to bias and accuracy in judgments of

interpersonal triggers.

1.3 Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1982) proposed that important attachment relationships

influence individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behavior "from the cradle to the grave."

According to attachment theory, early experiences with caregivers (also called

attachment figures) shape perceptions and expectations about the self and future

relationships. These internal working models develop based on the degree to which

individuals believe close others will be available when needed and feel they are worthy of

being loved, and can impact goals, feelings, and behavior across the lifespan (Fraley &

Shaver, 2000). Briefly, humans (especially when they are infants) rely on attachment figures for survival; this motivates them to seek proximity to their attachment figures during times of need. Caregivers who are consistently available and responsive foster within individuals a sense of *attachment security*, leading those individuals to develop positive views of the self and others. Conversely, caregivers who are frequently rejecting, unavailable, or unresponsive foster within individuals a sense of *attachment insecurity*, leading those individuals to develop doubts about their self-worth and the supportiveness of others. This notion is more than simply theoretical; indeed, empirical research has demonstrated links between early childhood experiences and adult attachment (for reviews see Simpson, W. A. Collins, Farrell, & Raby, 2015; Simpson, W. A. Collins, Salvatore, & Sung, 2014).[1]

Over the past three decades, scholars have applied attachment theory to understand and explain adult romantic relationship processes. Research by attachment scholars has established that two relatively orthogonal dimensions tap individual differences in self-report measures of adult attachment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Hudson, Heffernan, & Segal, 2015). Scores on the *anxiety* dimension reflect the degree to which individuals worry and ruminate about their relationships. Those who are more anxiously attached tend to crave affection and cling to their romantic partners but simultaneously fear rejection and abandonment and distrust their partners' love and investment (N. L. Collins, 1996). Scores on the *avoidance* dimension, on the other hand,

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[1] This research does not claim that early experiences are the sole determinant of later attachment; rather, early experiences are thought to put individuals "on a path," so to speak, that may help shape how their attachment develops across the lifespan. There are, of course, other life events in between early experiences in infancy/childhood and adulthood that may and likely do influence attachment orientations (e.g., a person's first "real" romantic relationship, peer relationships in teenage years, and so on).

reflect the degree to which individuals feel uncomfortable with closeness in their relationships. Those who are more avoidantly attached tend to be less invested in their relationships and strive to maintain emotional independence from their romantic partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Individuals with lower attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance are typically secure in their relationships; they do not obsess about potentially being rejected or abandoned by their partners and are comfortable with intimacy and dependence.

The attachment system activates under conditions of threat or stress, motivating individuals to respond in specific ways toward close others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007). Specifically, in the face of threat or stress more secure individuals (i.e., those who are less anxiously or less avoidantly attached) tend to use the primary attachment strategy of *proximity seeking*; that is, turning to their romantic partner for comfort and support. Insecure individuals (i.e., those who are more anxiously or more avoidantly attached), however, have learned through experience that proximity seeking is not an effective strategy, and thus when feeling threatened tend to engage in secondary attachment strategies that involve hyperactivating or deactivating the attachment system (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). More anxiously attached persons tend to use *hyperactivating strategies*, such as demanding attention or support from their partners while at the same time doubting that their partner will meet their needs (Campbell et al., 2005). In contrast, more avoidantly attached individuals tend to rely on *deactivating strategies*, such as denying attachment needs or attempting to distance themselves from their relationships (Simpson et al., 1992).

Relationships containing at least one partner who scores higher on attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance are typically less happy than relationships in which both partners are more secure. Chronic worries about abandonment lead more anxiously attached individuals to make strong attempts to maintain proximity to attachment figures, and monitor their partners and relationships closely for signs indicating deficient or waning physical or emotional intimacy. Nonetheless, more anxious persons harbor doubts about the dependability of their romantic partners; as such, they are more likely to assign negative attributions to their partner's behavior as well as fail to attend to information that may be beneficial for the relationship (N. L. Collins & Allard, 2001; N. L. Collins & B. C. Feeney, 2004). More anxious individuals have difficulty inhibiting rejection-related thoughts (Baldwin & Meunier, 1999), and have a lower threshold for perceiving threats to their relationships (e.g., N. L. Collins, 1996). Indeed, these individuals often perceive more conflict in their relationships, and escalate the severity of such conflict (Campbell et al., 2005). More anxious persons become emotionally and cognitively overwhelmed when the attachment system is activated (e.g., Main, 1991; Stanton & Campbell, 2014a, 2014b), and have a hard time containing their negative feelings (Mikulincer, 1998); this in turn appears to sometimes create unnecessary conflict in their relationships.

Similarly, the tendency for more avoidantly attached persons to suppress the attachment system via deactivating strategies can yield a host of potentially deleterious consequences for their romantic relationships. For example, more avoidant individuals tend to be less committed to their relationships, report greater interest in romantic alternatives, and have more permissive attitudes toward infidelity (DeWall et al., 2011). These individuals also engage in less self-disclosure (Bradford, J. A. Feeney, &

Campbell, 2002) and are less likely to turn to their partners for support or provide support to their partners during times of need (Simpson et al., 1992). Additionally, more avoidant persons experience greater general negative affect at baseline that stems from their belief that they cannot depend on close others (Stanton, Campbell, & Pink, 2015). Deactivating strategies, therefore, may allow more avoidant individuals to maintain a sense of autonomy and control, but may also result in facilitating greater negativity in their lives and relationships.

1.3.1 Biased and Accurate Relationship Perceptions as a Function of Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance

The degree to which romantic partners demonstrate bias and accuracy in perceptions of each other's triggers may be moderated by their attachment orientations. In contrast to the "rose-tinted glasses" people tend to adopt when making judgments of their romantic partners and relationships in general, those who score higher on attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance tend to adopt what could be thought of as "grey-tinted glasses." In other words, these individuals tend to view their partners and relationships in a pessimistic light. It may be that bias and accuracy processes play an important role in explaining the deleterious outcomes associated with insecure attachment. There is some empirical evidence supporting the notion that directional bias may vary as a function of attachment; for example, both forms of insecure attachment are associated with negative perceptions of partner support (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007), although the reports of more anxious or more avoidant individuals are not typically compared to their partner's actual ratings.

More anxiously attached persons' tendency to closely monitor their partners, however, appears to make them particularly adept at tracking their partner's thoughts and feelings. Indeed, research suggests that people scoring higher on attachment anxiety demonstrate greater tracking accuracy in relationship-relevant situations (see Simpson, Ickes, & Grich, 1999; Simpson et al., 2011). On the other hand, more avoidantly attached persons' tendency to withdraw from their relationships and keep their partners "at arm's length" appears to make them particularly inept when it comes to partner-related tracking accuracy. Studies have found that people scoring higher on attachment avoidance are less accurate at inferring their romantic partner's thoughts and feelings (Simpson et al., 2011). The majority of perception-relevant research on attachment, nevertheless, has examined directional bias and tracking accuracy separately, meaning that attachment scholars cannot yet make meaningful conclusions regarding how those processes may operate when assessed simultaneously.

Following from existing research, then, it may be that more anxiously attached individuals are more accurate in judging their partner's triggers and more avoidantly attached individuals are less accurate. Additionally, it may be that more anxious persons especially *over*estimate how much a given behavior triggers their partner, whereas more avoidant persons *under*estimate how much a given behavior triggers their partner. The negative relationship outcomes experienced by those with greater insecure attachment and those with a more insecurely attached partner may be explained by bias, accuracy, or both. To date, this potential interplay of bias and accuracy remains unexplored from an attachment perspective. A simultaneous investigation of bias and accuracy in relationship perceptions through the lens of attachment theory would extend prior research and

potentially shed light on the cognitive and affective aspects of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance.

1.4 The Present Research

The present two studies examined the interplay between bias and accuracy in perceptions of interpersonal triggers, and the implications of biased and accurate trigger knowledge for relationship well-being (e.g., satisfaction). I also explored the potential for attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance to moderate bias and accuracy in trigger judgments to help explain why insecure attachment may be associated with negative relationship outcomes. Study 1 was an exploratory study that aimed to identify 24 interpersonal triggers that would be important in predicting relationship outcomes. I made no specific predictions in Study 1 because the primary goal was to attain a comprehensive list of meaningful partner-specific triggers based on ratings from the general population. Study 2 used the measure adapted in Study 1 and examined trigger perceptions in a sample of romantic couples, utilizing the T&B Model (West & Kenny, 2011) to simultaneously test bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge. In Study 2, I tested three main hypotheses.

1.4.1 Hypothesis 1: Directional Bias and Tracking Accuracy in Judgments of Triggers

Reasoning from EMT (Haselton & Buss, 2000; Haselton & Galperin, 2013) suggests that perceiving a trigger to be absent when in truth it is present (i.e., an incorrect rejection) is likely to be the most costly judgment error in the context of interpersonal triggers because failing to perceive a partner's trigger may lead the perceiver to

unknowingly enact the triggering behavior, potentially undermining the relationship over time. Thus, I predicted that perceivers would *over*estimate the degree to which a given behavior triggers their partner; in other words, they would exhibit positive directional bias when judging their partner's triggers.

Research suggests that people like to be perceived accurately (e.g., Lackenbauer et al., 2010; Swann, 2012). Additionally, the risk of relationship conflict or partner dissatisfaction that may occur from misunderstanding each other should motivate partners to pay attention to the behaviors that each person considers bothersome. I therefore expected that partners would, in general, accurately track each other's triggers (i.e., demonstrate a positive truth force), as knowledge of the behaviors that irk one another is presumably important for avoiding conflict (see also Friesen & Kammrath, 2011), or handling conflict more constructively.

Close others are often similar in several domains (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001), and when making interpersonal judgments they may project their own feelings onto their perceptions of their partner. Triggers may be one domain in which romantic partners are inherently similar to some degree; that is, if Elisabeth is triggered by hard-heartedness, she should assume to some extent that William is as well. However, it is possible that triggers may be person-specific as opposed to being shared by partners (e.g., if Elisabeth is triggered by hard-heartedness, she might not assume that William is as well). My predictions regarding assumed similarity, therefore, were exploratory. Importantly, I expected that partners will exhibit positive directional bias and accurately track each other's triggers adjusting for assumed similarity (see West & Kenny, 2011).

1.4.2 Hypothesis 2: Moderation of Directional Bias and Tracking Accuracy in Judgments of Triggers by Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance

Research has already demonstrated a link between attachment orientations and accuracy in relationship-related judgments (e.g., Simpson et al., 2011). Conceptually replicating and extending this research, I expected that more anxiously attached individuals would be more accurate and exhibit positive directional bias when judging their partner's triggers. Conversely, I predicted that more avoidantly attached individuals would not demonstrate tracking accuracy and would exhibit negative directional bias when making trigger judgments. The dyadic nature of Study 2 additionally allowed me to explore the perceptions of individuals who had a more anxious or more avoidant *partner*. I expected that those with a more anxious or more avoidant partner would be less accurate and exhibit negative directional bias in their judgments. The rationale for this prediction stems from research suggesting that more insecurely attached persons do not openly disclose their thoughts and feelings, and when they do it is in an indirect manner (see, e.g., Anders & Tucker, 2000; Bradford et al., 2002). Lastly, I also predicted that the interplay between bias and accuracy as a function of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance would uniquely inform the negative relationship outcomes (e.g., worse conflict management) typically linked to insecure attachment. Put another way, I expected that positive directional bias combined with higher tracking accuracy (in the case of attachment anxiety) or negative directional bias combined with a lack of tracking

accuracy (in the cased of attachment avoidance) would interact to predict negative relationship outcomes.

1.4.3 Hypothesis 3: Implications of Directional Bias and Tracking Accuracy for Relationship Outcomes

Perceivers' directional bias and ability to accurate track their partner's thoughts and feelings have been shown to influence other relationship outcomes (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall & Hammond, 2013). For instance, partners who underestimate each other's level of commitment tend to more feelings of relationship insecurity day-to-day, especially when this underestimation aligns accurately with the partner's actual reported commitment (Overall & Hammond, 2013). Adjusting for assumed similarity, then, I hypothesized that positive directional bias and high tracking accuracy in judgments of triggers would be associated with higher relationship satisfaction, greater feelings of being understood by the partner, and healthier conflict management in the relationship, particularly for the partners about whom judgments were being made.

Chapter 2

2 Study 1

The primary goal of Study 1 was to identify 24 triggers that would potentially be important in predicting relationship outcomes (e.g., satisfaction). Adapting Friesen and Kammrath's (2011) existing trigger measure, in an initial screening I narrowed a list of 72 irksome behaviors down to 36. Specifically, I removed behaviors that were not easily adaptable to be partner-specific or that did not seem to capture a core part of romantic relationship functioning (e.g., "Obliviousness: When someone is totally unaware of his or her surroundings. When he/she has a conversation in the middle of the hallway and doesn't notice he/she is in other people's way. When he/she walks slowly in front of everyone else and blocks the people behind him/her"). I then adapted the 36-item list of behaviors to be partner-specific (i.e., partner-enacted) rather than general. Participants then rated the importance and frequency of each of the remaining 36 triggers. Triggers were rank-ordered by importance and frequency and the 24 triggers considered most important were retained for Study 2. The secondary goal of Study 1 was to get a sense of how relationship triggers might relate to attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Exploratory analyses tested these associations.

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Study Preregistration and Ethics Approval

Study 1 was preregistered on the Open Science Framework at osf.io/p56mn (Stanton & Campbell, 2014, October 3). Study measures, a priori hypotheses, syntax

files, and data are available at the web address above. Study 1 was approved by the University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A).

2.1.2 Participants

Participants were 400 individuals residing in the United States who were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk data demonstrate psychometric reliability similar to laboratory data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). To be eligible for the study, individuals had to be at least 18 years of age and be currently involved in a romantic relationship lasting at least three months. They also needed to have an active MTurk account and have at least 97% approval from previous experimenters in whose studies they had participated. Individuals received USD-$0.50 in appreciation of their participation in the study.

Consistent with my preregistered data analytic plan, prior to running any analyses I excluded 47 individuals who (a) failed to meet eligibility requirements or (b) did not complete crucial questionnaires or the study as a whole. The final sample thus comprised 353 individuals (122 men, 231 women). Participants were 18-71 years of age (M_{years} = 33.26, SD_{years} = 10.25) and were involved in relationships lasting 3 months to 45 years (M_{years} = 7.18, SD_{years} = 7.54). The majority of individuals (95%) were in heterosexual relationships. Approximately 46% of participants reported dating their partner casually or exclusively, and 54% reported being common-law, engaged, or married. Many participants (76%) indicated that they were cohabiting with their romantic partner.

2.1.3 Materials and Procedure

The study was completed online and participants were allowed to skip any questions they wished. Participants were told they would complete a study on which

romantic relationship behaviors would be considered most important. They first completed a general demographic questionnaire that asked them to provide their gender, age, relationship status, relationship length, and other variables.

Participants then completed the 36-item Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire (see Appendix B) that I adapted from Friesen and Kammrath's (2011) existing measure of interpersonal triggers. Participants read 36 descriptions of potentially irksome relationship behaviors; each description began with a label, followed by a few sentences describing the behavior (e.g., "Stubbornness: When my partner is not willing to compromise or cooperate with me. When he/she insists on getting his/her way. When he/she stubbornly refuses to bend or be flexible"). For each behavior description, participants indicated (1) how important they felt the relationship trigger would be in predicting romantic relationship outcomes (e.g., how happy they are, etc.) on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all important*, 3 = *moderately important*, 5 = *very important*), and (2) how frequently each relationship trigger occurred in their current relationship on a 5-point scale (1 = *never*, 3 = *sometimes*, 5 = *all the time*). Following the 36 descriptions an opportunity was provided for participants to describe a relationship trigger they considered very important that had not appeared on the list.

Next, participants reported their attachment orientations with the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (Brennan et al., 1998; see Appendix C). Participants responded to 18 items that assessed attachment anxiety (e.g., "I worry a fair amount about losing my partner") and 18 items that assessed attachment avoidance (e.g., "I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close") on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Responses were averaged across the 18 items for each

attachment dimension, with higher scores indicating greater attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance, respectively. Reliability was robust for both attachment anxiety (α = .94) and attachment avoidance (α = .95). In this sample, participants' attachment anxiety scores ranged from 1.00-6.72 (M = 3.35, SD = 1.34); their attachment avoidance scores ranged from 1.00-5.94 (M = 2.57, SD = 1.20).

Following these questionnaires, participants completed a few additional scales that were not central to the goals of Study 1 and were included for the purposes of conducting additional auxiliary analyses. Finally, participants viewed a debriefing screen and were compensated for their participation.

2.2 Results

2.2.1 Ratings of Relationship Trigger Importance and Frequency

Descriptive statistics for relationship trigger importance and frequency ratings are presented in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively. On average, triggers were rated as moderately to very important, and were reported to rarely or sometimes occur in participants' relationships. Fourteen triggers were ranked in the top 24 for both importance and frequency; specifically (in alphabetical order), anger/aggression, clinginess, conflict avoidance, deflection of responsibility, disregard, emotional autonomy, emotional dependence, emotional under-expression, judging, lack of motivation, lack of seriousness, negativity, selfishness, and stubbornness. Interestingly,

some of the triggers considered to be the most important in predicting relationship

outcomes (e.g., dishonesty, mistreatment) were not reported to occur frequently.[2, 3]

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[2] An exploratory Pearson bivariate correlation analysis examining the relation between overall trigger importance (the mean of all 24 importance ratings) and overall trigger frequency (the mean of all 24 frequency ratings) revealed that trigger importance and trigger frequency were not significantly correlated, $r = .03$, $p = .55$. In other words, triggers with higher importance ratings were not reported to occur more (or less) frequently in participants' relationships.

[3] Exploratory factor analyses conducted on trigger importance and frequency suggested that the 24 items did not cluster into definitive factors.

Table 1
*Study 1: Relationship Trigger Importance Ratings Ordered from
Most Important to Least Important*

	Trigger	Range	*M*	*SD*
1	**Dishonesty**	**1-5**	**4.59**	**0.82**
2	**Mistreatment**	**1-5**	**4.58**	**0.82**
3	**Mistrust/Suspicion**	**1-5**	**4.39**	**0.93**
4	**Conflict Seeking**	**1-5**	**4.24**	**0.97**
5	**Anger/Aggression**	**1-5**	**4.16**	**0.96**
6	**Hard-Heartedness**	**1-5**	**4.14**	**0.96**
7	**Control**	**1-5**	**4.12**	**1.07**
8	**Disregard**	**1-5**	**4.12**	**1.03**
9	**Judging**	**1-5**	**4.09**	**1.01**
10	**Selfishness**	**1-5**	**4.01**	**1.00**
11	**Lack of Motivation**	**1-5**	**3.98**	**1.09**
12	**Divulgence**	**1-5**	**3.89**	**1.12**
13	**Insincerity**	**1-5**	**3.87**	**1.04**
14	**Stubbornness**	**1-5**	**3.87**	**0.99**
15	**Emotional Autonomy**	**1-5**	**3.84**	**1.07**
16	**Deflection of Responsibility**	**1-5**	**3.78**	**1.05**
17	**Conflict Avoidance**	**1-5**	**3.72**	**1.05**
18	**Monitoring**	**1-5**	**3.70**	**1.11**
19	**Negativity**	**1-5**	**3.70**	**1.11**
20	**Clinginess**	**1-5**	**3.63**	**1.17**
21	**Emotional Under-Expression**	**1-5**	**3.60**	**1.07**
22	**Emotional Dependence**	**1-5**	**3.55**	**1.14**
23	**Risk-Taking**	**1-5**	**3.50**	**1.10**
24	**Lack of Seriousness**	**1-5**	**3.48**	**1.10**
25	Moodiness	1-5	3.39	1.09
26	Undue-Attention Seeking	1-5	3.39	1.13
27	Failure to Return Contacts	1-5	3.38	1.14
28	Conventionality	1-5	3.32	1.14
29	Impatience	1-5	3.28	1.13
30	Inconsideration of Time	1-5	3.22	1.14
31	Interruption	1-5	3.18	1.15
32	Stress/Tension	1-5	3.18	1.12
33	Complaining	1-5	3.13	1.16
34	Ignorance	1-5	3.09	1.21
35	Anxiety/Worry	1-5	3.00	1.17
36	Instrumental Dependence	1-5	2.93	1.23

Note. Participants rated trigger importance on a 5-point scale (1 =
not at all important, 3 = *moderately important*, 5 = *very important*).
The 24 triggers printed in boldface were retained for Study 2.

Table 2
Study 1: Relationship Trigger Frequency Ratings Ordered from Most Frequent to Least Frequent

	Trigger	Range	*M*	*SD*
1	**Emotional Dependence**	**1-5**	**3.34**	**1.07**
2	Moodiness	1-5	2.91	1.01
3	Stress/Tension	1-5	2.81	1.01
4	**Stubbornness**	**1-5**	**2.79**	**1.07**
5	Complaining	1-5	2.77	1.05
6	Anxiety/Worry	1-5	2.69	1.20
7	**Conflict Avoidance**	**1-5**	**2.63**	**1.06**
8	**Emotional Under-Expression**	**1-5**	**2.56**	**1.11**
9	Interruption	1-5	2.49	1.06
10	Impatience	1-5	2.48	1.09
11	**Negativity**	**1-5**	**2.43**	**1.18**
12	**Selfishness**	**1-5**	**2.42**	**1.16**
13	**Deflection of Responsibility**	**1-5**	**2.41**	**1.18**
14	**Emotional Autonomy**	**1-5**	**2.37**	**1.06**
15	Instrumental Dependence	1-5	2.35	1.12
16	**Lack of Motivation**	**1-5**	**2.33**	**1.20**
17	**Clinginess**	**1-5**	**2.31**	**1.12**
18	Ignorance	1-5	2.30	1.03
19	Inconsideration of Time	1-5	2.26	1.07
20	Conventionality	1-5	2.25	1.07
21	**Disregard**	**1-5**	**2.22**	**1.01**
22	**Judging**	**1-5**	**2.21**	**1.08**
23	**Anger/Aggression**	**1-5**	**2.20**	**1.10**
24	**Lack of Seriousness**	**1-5**	**2.18**	**1.09**
25	**Conflict Seeking**	**1-5**	**2.16**	**1.13**
26	**Hard-Heartedness**	**1-5**	**2.14**	**1.16**
27	**Risk-Taking**	**1-5**	**2.14**	**1.05**
28	**Control**	**1-5**	**2.12**	**1.08**
29	Failure to Return Contacts	1-5	2.07	1.02
30	Undue-Attention Seeking	1-5	2.02	1.05
31	**Dishonesty**	**1-5**	**2.01**	**1.07**
32	**Insincerity**	**1-5**	**1.91**	**1.03**
33	**Mistrust/Suspicion**	**1-5**	**1.91**	**1.10**
34	**Monitoring**	**1-5**	**1.87**	**1.06**
35	**Mistreatment**	**1-5**	**1.85**	**1.04**
36	**Divulgence**	**1-5**	**1.82**	**1.01**

Note. Participants rated trigger frequency on a 5-point scale (1 = *never*, 3 = *sometimes*, 5 = *all the time*). The 24 triggers printed in boldface were retained for Study 2.

2.2.2 Associations of Trigger Importance and Frequency with Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance

A multiple regression model was conducted on the data with ratings of trigger importance as the outcome variable and centered attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance entered as predictor variables. A second model was conducted with ratings of trigger frequency as the outcome variable (the predictor variables were the same).

Results from these two models are displayed in Table 3. Individuals who were more (vs. less) anxiously attached did not differ in their ratings of trigger importance; those who were more (vs. less) avoidantly attached reported that triggers were less important for relationship outcomes. Both more (vs. less) anxious and more (vs. less) avoidant persons reported that triggers occurred more frequently in their current relationship.

Table 3
Study 1: Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance Predicting
Trigger Importance and Trigger Frequency

| | Trigger Importance | | | Trigger Frequency | | |
	b	*SE*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*t*
Attachment Anxiety	.02	.03	0.83	.14	.02	5.70***
Attachment Avoidance	-.07	.03	-2.46**	.20	.03	7.44***

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported.
**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

2.2.3 Auxiliary Analyses

Lastly, auxiliary analyses were conducted with gender, age, and relationship length. An independent samples t-test examining gender differences in ratings of trigger importance revealed that, on average, women ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.59$) considered the 24 triggers to be more important for relationship outcomes compared to men ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.61$), $t = 5.90$, $p < .001$. When it came to ratings of trigger frequency, however, women ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 0.67$) and men ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.67$) reported similar levels of trigger occurrence in their current relationship, $t = -0.72$, $p = .47$.[4]

Pearson bivariate correlation analyses indicated that participants' age was positively correlated with trigger importance, such that older individuals rated triggers as being more important for relationship outcomes, $r = .12$, $p = .03$. Age was not significantly related to reports of trigger frequency, $r = .04$, $p = .46$. Relationship length was not significantly associated with ratings of trigger importance or frequency, $r = .05$, $p = .35$ and $r = .04$, $p = .47$, respectively.

2.3 Discussion

Study 1 identified 24 relationship-related irksome behaviors that were considered to be important for relationship outcomes by a convenience sample from the general population of the United States. In general, participants reported that the partner-specific relationship triggers were moderately to very important in their potential to predict how happy they and their partner would be or whether they and their partner would stay

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[4] Supplementary analyses of gender differences in relationship trigger importance and frequency across each of the 24 most important individual trigger items are available in Appendix D.

together in the long run. In terms of frequency, most relationship triggers seemed to occur rarely or sometimes.

The 24 relationship triggers retained for Study 2 were (in order of rated importance) dishonesty, mistreatment, mistrust/suspicion, conflict seeking, anger/aggression, hard-heartedness, control, disregard, judging, selfishness, lack of motivation, divulgence, insincerity, stubbornness, emotional autonomy, deflection of responsibility, conflict avoidance, monitoring, negativity, clinginess, emotional under-expression, emotional dependence, risk-taking, and lack of seriousness. Of these 24 irksome behaviors, six (i.e., emotional dependence, stubbornness, conflict avoidance, emotional under-expression, negativity, and selfishness) were reported to occur with high relative frequency, eight (i.e., deflection of responsibility, emotional autonomy, lack of motivation, clinginess, disregard, judging, anger/aggression, and lack of seriousness) were reported to occur with moderate relative frequency, and 10 (i.e., conflict seeking, hard-heartedness, risk-taking, control, dishonesty, insincerity, mistrust/suspicion, monitoring, mistreatment, and divulgence) were reported to occur with low relative frequency.[5]

This study additionally provided preliminary evidence that attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance may indeed influence the perceptual processes and relationship dynamics associated with triggers. More (vs. less) anxiously attached persons reported similar trigger importance ratings, whereas more (vs. less) avoidantly attached persons reported lower relationship trigger importance ratings. Nevertheless, both more (vs. less) anxious and more (vs. less) avoidant individuals reported higher trigger frequency in their

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[5] High, moderate, and low relative frequency refer respectively to the top, middle, and bottom groups of 12 relationship triggers (in other words, the top, middle, and bottom 33%) that can be seen in Table 2.

current relationship. These findings dovetail nicely with existing attachment literature that has demonstrated the rather ubiquitous nature of more anxious and more avoidant persons' negative relationship perceptions (e.g., N. L. Collins & B. C. Feeney, 2004; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In particular, the greater perceptions of trigger frequency reported by both forms of insecure attachment in Study 1 fit with previous findings involving the recurrent and often unhealthy existence and escalation of conflict that typically characterizes more insecure individuals' relationships (e.g., Campbell et al., 2005; Domingue & Mollen, 2009).

Finally, auxiliary analyses with three potentially necessary covariates (gender, age, and relationship length) revealed occasional and modest associations with relationship triggers. The analysis with gender revealed that, overall, women (vs. men) rated the 24 triggers as more important for relationship outcomes; women and men did not differ in their reports of trigger frequency. Participant age was positively correlated with trigger importance but unrelated to trigger frequency, and relationship length was not meaningfully associated with relationship trigger importance or frequency. Thus, it seemed to be worthwhile to take gender, age, and (possibly) relationship length into account when exploring bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge in Study 2.

Chapter 3

3 Study 2

The primary goal of Study 2 was to investigate the interplay of bias and accuracy in romantic partners' judgments of each other's relationship triggers—that is, to test the extent to which partners overestimate and/or accurately perceive the behaviors that irk each other—as well as to explore the potential for bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge to predict relationship outcomes (e.g., relationship satisfaction, conflict management). In this study both members of a couple reported their perceptions of their own and their partner's relationship triggers using the 24-item measure constructed in Study 1, and bias and accuracy was via with the T&B Model of judgment (West & Kenny, 2011). The secondary goal of Study 2 was to test if, when, and how actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance moderated judgments of relationship triggers. I also explored the possible relationship consequences of bias and accuracy in judgments made by more insecurely attached individuals.

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Study Preregistration and Ethics Approval

As with Study 1, Study 2 was also preregistered on the Open Science Framework. The Study 2 measures and data reported herein were taken from a larger empirical investigation that is preregistered at osf.io/zbjre (Stanton & Campbell, 2015, January 31a); the study measures, a priori hypotheses, syntax files, and data of Study 2 in particular are preregistered and available at osf.io/w3qy8 (Stanton & Campbell, 2015,

January 31b). Study 2 was approved by the University of Western Ontario Non-Medical

Research Ethics Board (see Appendix E).

3.1.2 Participants

The sample comprised 80 heterosexual romantic couples[6] recruited from the

University of Western Ontario and surrounding London, Ontario community. To be

eligible for the study, partners had to be at least 18 years of age and be currently involved

in a romantic relationship lasting at least one month. They also needed to be able to

attend a lab session together to complete the study. Individuals received CAD-$15.00

each (CAD-$30.00 per couple) in appreciation of their participation in the study.

Participants were 18-68 years of age ($M_{years} = 23.64$, $SD_{years} = 8.21$) and were

involved in relationships lasting 1 month to 38 years ($M_{years} = 2.83$, $SD_{years} = 5.33$).

Approximately 83% of participants reported dating their partner casually or exclusively,

and 17% reported being common-law, engaged, or married. A minority of participants

(36%) indicated that they were cohabiting with their romantic partner.

3.1.3 Materials and Procedure

Partners arrived at the lab together and were greeted by a research associate. Each

person was then escorted to a private room where they separately completed the study.

Questionnaires were completed online and participants were allowed to skip any

questions they wished. Participants first completed a general background questionnaire

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[6] The full sample comprised 84 romantic couples (80 heterosexual, 4 lesbian); however, because there were
not enough same-sex couples to draw firm conclusions about their relationship perceptions or to make
meaningful comparisons between the relationship experiences of heterosexual and same-sex couples, the
four lesbian couples were removed from analyses for the sake of parsimony.

that asked them to provide their gender, age, relationship status, relationship length, and other variables.

Subsequently, participants completed the 24-item Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire constructed in Study 1. Partners completed two versions of the measure, one that focused on their perceptions of the self (see Appendix F) and one that focused on their perceptions of their partner (see Appendix G). In the self-perception version, participants read 24 descriptions of potentially irksome relationship behaviors enacted by their romantic partner; each description began with a label, followed by a few sentences describing the behavior (e.g., "Judging: When my partner judges and criticizes me. When he/she easily finds faults in me. When he/she points out the negatives in me"). For each behavior description, participants indicated how much the behavior triggers them on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 3 = *moderately*, 5 = *very much*). In this sample, partners' reports of their own triggers ranged from 1.00-5.00 ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.30$).

In the partner-perception version, participants read 24 descriptions of potentially irksome relationship behaviors enacted by themselves; each description began with a label, followed by a few sentences describing the behavior (e.g., "Judging: When I judge and criticize my partner. When I easily find faults in him/her. When I point out the negatives in him/her"). For each behavior description, participants indicated how much they believed the behavior triggers their romantic partner on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 3 = *moderately*, 5 = *very much*). In this sample, partners' perceptions of each other's triggers ranged from 1.00-5.00 ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.24$). Thus, each member of the couple provided a trigger profile for themselves in addition to a profile for their perceptions of their romantic partner. The 24 triggers were treated as repeated measures within

individuals. Calculation of bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge involves T&B Model specifications that are described in detail in Section 3.2.1.

Partners then completed the Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (Eggeman, Moxley, & Schumm, 1985; see Appendix H), a 37-item measure that taps three stages of interaction in conflict via three subscales. The first stage, agenda-building, was assessed with 11 items designed to explore conflict management perceptions at the beginning of a disagreement (e.g., "When you and your partner are beginning to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, how often do you both begin to appreciate each other's points of view on the matter fairly soon?"). The second stage, arguing, was assessed with 15 items designed to explore conflict management perceptions in the middle of a disagreement (e.g., "After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often are you able to clearly identify the specific things about which you disagree?"). The arguing subscale also includes perceptions of facial expressions and tone of voice (e.g., "After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often does your partner's facial expression or tone of voice convey a sense of respect toward you?").

The third and final stage, negotiating, was assessed with 11 items designed to explore conflict management perceptions at the end of a disagreement (e.g., "About the time you and your partner feel you are close to a solution to your disagreement over an important issue, how often are you able to completely resolve it with some sort of compromise that is OK with both of you?"). The items in all three subscales were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *almost never*, 5 = *almost always*), and responses were averaged across items for each subscale such that higher scores indicated healthier agenda-building

(α = .89), arguing (α = .89), and negotiating (α = .84), respectively. An overall conflict management variable that combined all 37 items into one measure also demonstrated sufficient reliability (α = .95). In this sample, partners' agenda-building scores ranged from 1.55-5.00 ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.78$); their arguing scores ranged from 2.33-5.00 ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.63$); their negotiating scores ranged from 2.18-5.00 ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.64$); and their overall conflict management scores ranged from 2.24-5.00 ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.61$).

Next, participants reported their relationship satisfaction using the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988; see Appendix I), a 7-item measure rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all/extremely poor*, 5 = *a great deal/extremely good*) that assessed how happy individuals are in their current romantic relationship (e.g., "How good is your relationship compared to most?"). Responses were averaged across the seven items such that higher scores indicated greater relationship satisfaction, α = .86. Following this measure partners then indicated how much they felt their romantic partner "gets" them across four items (e.g., "My partner understands me") from the Intimacy/Responsiveness Scale (Reis, 2003; see Appendix J). Items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*), and responses were averaged across the four items such that higher scores indicated greater feelings of being understood by the partner, α = .79. In this sample, partners' relationship satisfaction scores ranged from 2.14-5.00 ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.59$); their feelings of being understood scores ranged from 2.00-5.00 ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.63$).

Lastly, participants reported their attachment orientations with the same attachment measure used in Study 1 (i.e., the Experiences in Close Relationship Scale, Brennan et al., 1998; see Appendix C). Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance

were scored identically to Study 1 and, as in Study 1, reliability was robust for both attachment anxiety (α = .91) and attachment avoidance (α = .92). In this sample, partners' attachment anxiety scores ranged from 1.06-5.72 (M = 3.34, SD = 1.20); their attachment avoidance scores ranged from 1.00-5.56 (M = 2.33, SD = 1.05). After both partners completed all study questionnaires, they were reunited and debriefed, compensated, and dismissed.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Data Analytic Strategy

The data analytic approach was guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; see Campbell & Stanton, 2015; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) and the T&B Model of judgment (West & Kenny, 2011). Models were tested using multilevel modeling (MLM, also known as hierarchical linear modeling; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), following the suggestions of Kenny et al. (2006; see also Campbell & Kashy, 2002) regarding the use of MLM with dyadic data. In the dyadic case, MLM treats the data from each partner as nested scores within a group that has an N of 2. According to the APIM, the outcomes of individuals involved in a romantic relationship are affected by not only on their *own* characteristics and inputs, but also their *partner's* characteristics and inputs. For example, consider how Elisabeth's perceptions of her partner William's triggers might be influenced by Elisabeth's attachment anxiety: Elisabeth's biased and accurate perceptions may be related to her *own* degree of attachment anxiety (i.e., an *actor effect*); however, Elisabeth's perceptions may be systematically associated with *William's* degree of attachment anxiety as well (i.e., a *partner effect*). Including partner effects allows for the testing of the mutual influence

that often exists between romantic partners, in addition to statistically accounting for this mutual influence when assessing both actor and partner effects.

As mentioned previously, in the T&B Model the person making judgments of their partner's proclivities is termed the *perceiver*; the perceiver's judgments are compared with their *partner's* actual ratings (West & Kenny, 2011). The data in Study 2 have a nested structure, with perceivers and partners' multiple ratings of triggers across the 24 items (Level 1) nested within couple (Level 2). First, the associations across the perceivers' judgments of their partner's triggers and the partners' actual reported triggers (the Level 1 repeated measures variables) were examined to test the extent to which judgments of the partner's triggers were biased and accurate. The basic Level 1 equation is as follows:

$$J_{ij} = b_{0j} + b_{1j} \text{ (actual rating for trigger } i \text{ by perceiver } j\text{'s partner)} + b_{2j} \text{ (perceiver } j\text{'s own rating for trigger } i) + e_{ij},$$

where J represents perceiver j's judgment of their partner's rating for a particular trigger (i); b_0 represents perceiver j's intercept (directional bias); b_1 represents the effect of the actual rating for trigger i by perceiver j's *partner* (tracking accuracy); b_2 represents the effect of perceiver j's own rating for trigger i (assumed similarity); and e_{ij} represents random error and all other unmeasured biases that influence perceiver j's judgments.

In accordance with the specifications of the T&B Model (West & Kenny, 2011), the perceiver's judgments of their partner's triggers (the outcome variable) were centered on the partner's actual trigger ratings by subtracting the grand mean of all the partners' trigger ratings (i.e., mean across dyads) from the perceivers' judgments for each behavior. Using this centering strategy, the intercept represents the difference between

the mean of the partner's actual trigger rating and the mean of the perceivers' judgments of that trigger rating. The average of this coefficient across perceivers thus tests whether their judgments differed from the partners' actual ratings across all 24 triggering behaviors, as well as indicates the direction of the bias (i.e., directional bias). A negative average intercept indicates that perceivers generally underestimate partners' triggers, whereas a positive average intercept indicates that perceivers generally overestimate partners' triggers. The effect (slope) of the partner's actual trigger ratings on the perceiver's judgments of those ratings reflects tracking accuracy, and the effect (slope) of the perceiver's own trigger ratings on their judgments of their partner's triggers reflects assumed similarity. A positive slope indicates greater tracking accuracy or assumed similarity, respectively.

Following analyses of bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge across the sample as a whole, the model described above will be conducted with the addition of actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance as moderating variables. The main effects of actor and partner attachment anxiety or avoidance indicate directional bias, and the interaction of attachment and the truth and bias forces indicate the extent to which attachment is associated with more or less accuracy and assumed similarity, respectively. In other words, actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance will be entered as predictors of between-person variability in each parameter in the equation listed above. In these analyses, the Level 1 intercept (directional bias) and slopes (tracking accuracy and assumed similarity) are treated as dependent variables predicted by individual differences in attachment modeled at Level 2:

$b_{0j} = B_{00} + B_{01}$ (actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) $+ u_{0j}$

$b_{1j} = B_{10} + B_{11}$ (actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) $+ u_{1j}$

$b_{2j} = B_{20} + B_{21}$ (actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) $+ u_{2j}$

The first equation examines the effect of attachment orientations on directional bias (b_{0j}), where B_{00} represents the Level 2 intercept reflecting average levels of directional bias across perceivers, B_{01} is a coefficient testing whether perceivers' and partners' attachment orientations predict levels of directional bias, and u_{0j} represents individual variation in bias. The second equation gives the cross-level interaction between accuracy and perceivers' and partners' attachment orientations and assesses the extent to which tracking accuracy (b_{1j}) varies according to levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance. B_{10} represents the main effect of accuracy, B_{11} represents the moderating effect of attachment orientations on accuracy, and u_{1j} represents variation in accuracy slopes across perceivers. Finally, the third equation gives the interaction between the bias force and perceivers' and partners' attachment orientations and assesses whether assumed similarity (b_{2j}) varies according to individual differences in attachment anxiety and avoidance. B_{20} represents the main effect of assumed similarity, B_{21} represents the moderation of the assumed similarity effect by attachment orientations, and u_{2j} represents variation in assumed similarity slopes across perceivers.

To assess the consequences of biased and accurate trigger knowledge, each outcome variable of interest (e.g., relationship satisfaction) was regressed on perceivers' perceptions of the partner's triggers, the partner's actual trigger ratings, and the interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual trigger ratings (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; West & Kenny, 2011), controlling for the perceiver's own reported trigger ratings as a proxy for assumed similarity (specified a

priori at osf.io/w3qy8; Stanton & Campbell, 2015, January 31b). In these analyses, the main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers tests whether overestimation of the partner's triggers is associated with increases in positive relationship outcomes, over and above the impact of the partner's actual trigger ratings. The interaction term tests whether any increases in positive relationship outcomes associated with overestimating the partner's triggers are greater when those perceptions are more accurate. These same models were then conducted with attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance entered as moderating variables.

3.2.2 Testing Hypothesis 1 – Bias and Accuracy in Trigger Knowledge

As seen in Table 4, Hypothesis 1 garnered partial support. Contrary to expectations, partners did not demonstrate positive directional bias when making judgments of each other's relationship triggers; rather, they exhibited no directional bias at all. As predicted, however, partners were able to accurately track the pattern of each other's trigger profiles. Results from the first T&B Model analysis also revealed that partners exhibited assumed similarity (i.e., they projected their own feelings about a given relationship trigger onto their perceptions of their partner) when making their judgments.[7] The fact that tracking accuracy emerged adjusting for assumed similarity means that it represents direct accuracy (accuracy once projection is taken into account; West & Kenny, 2011).

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[7] The effects of assumed similarity are available to view in the tables containing results from T&B Model analyses, but these effects will not be formally discussed in the text as my primary interest was to examine directional bias and tracking accuracy (adjusting for assumed similarity).

Table 4

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 1 – Directional Bias, Tracking Accuracy, and Assumed Similarity of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers

Judgments of Partner's Triggers	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Directional Bias	-.02	.02	-1.16	-.06, .01	.03
Tracking Accuracy	.28	.03	6.87***	.12, .23	.62
Assumed Similarity	.33	.03	11.00***	.27, .38	.77

Note. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

***$p < .001$

3.2.2.1 Testing Hypothesis 2 – Moderation of Bias and Accuracy in Trigger Knowledge by Attachment Anxiety

I next ran the T&B Model with the main effects of centered actor and partner attachment anxiety (which represent directional bias as a function of attachment anxiety), as well as the interactions between attachment anxiety and tracking accuracy and attachment anxiety assumed similarity, entered as predictor variables. Results from this analysis are presented in Step 1 of Table 5. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, an actor effect of attachment anxiety emerged for directional bias such that more anxiously attached perceivers significantly overestimated the extent to which their partner was triggered across the 24 irksome behaviors. A marginal partner effect of attachment anxiety also emerged for directional bias; perceivers with a more anxious *partner* marginally underestimated the extent to which their partner was triggered across the 24 behaviors.

Contrary to expectations and perhaps inconsistent with prior research, perceivers who were more anxiously attached did not accurately track their partner's pattern of relationship triggers to a greater extent. However, a significant interaction did emerge between *partner* attachment anxiety and tracking accuracy. Perceivers were able to accurately track the pattern of their partner's triggers irrespective of whether their partner was more or less anxious, $b = .13$, $SE = .03$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$ and $b = .22$, $SE = .03$, $t = 6.89$, $p < .001$, respectively, though the effect was stronger when the partner was less anxious (see Figure 1).

Although not specified in my a priori data analytic plan, I conducted exploratory T&B analyses that included the interactions between actor and partner attachment anxiety predicting directional bias, tracking accuracy, and assumed similarity, the results of

which can be seen in Step 2 of Table 5. A two-way interaction between actor and partner attachment anxiety predicting directional bias emerged. Specifically, more anxiously attached perceivers systematically overestimated their less (vs. more) anxious partner's triggers, $b = -.08$, $SE = .03$, $t = -3.02$, $p = .003$, whereas less anxious perceivers' directional bias did not vary as a function of their partner's attachment anxiety, $b < -.01$, $SE = .02$, $t = -0.02$, $p = .99$.

Additionally, results revealed a three-way interaction between actor attachment anxiety, partner attachment anxiety, and tracking accuracy. Perceivers who were less anxiously attached accurately tracked the pattern of their partner's triggers regardless of whether the partner's attachment anxiety was higher or lower, $b = .27$, $SE = .04$, $t = 7.10$, $p < .001$ and $b = .19$, $SE = .05$, $t = 4.23$, $p < .001$, respectively. When perceivers were more anxious, however, they were able to accurately track their partner's triggers only when the partner was less anxious, $b = .17$, $SE = .04$, $t = 4.39$, $p < .001$. When the partner was more anxious, perceivers who were also more anxious did not demonstrate tracking accuracy, $b = .06$, $SE = .06$, $t = 1.08$, $p = .28$. The three-way interaction is presented graphically in Figure 2.

Table 5
Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 2 – Effects of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety on Directional Bias, Tracking Accuracy, and Assumed Similarity of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers

Judgments of Partner's Triggers	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1					
Directional Bias					
Actor Attachment Anxiety	.06	.02	3.98***	.03, .09	.07
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.03	.02	-1.93[+]	-.06, .01	.03
Tracking Accuracy					
Actor Attachment Anxiety	< -.01	.02	-0.15	-.04, .03	.01
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.04	.02	-2.27*	-.07, -.01	.20
Assumed Similarity					
Actor Attachment Anxiety	< -.01	.02	-0.02	-.04, .04	.01
Partner Attachment Anxiety	.06	.02	3.26***	.02, .10	.29
Step 2					
Directional Bias					
Actor × Partner Anxiety	-.03	.01	-2.41*	-.06, -.01	.06
Tracking Accuracy					
Actor × Partner Anxiety	-.03	.02	-1.93[+]	-.07, .01	.22
Assumed Similarity					
Actor × Partner Anxiety	.01	.02	0.39	-.03, .05	.04

Note. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
[+]$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$
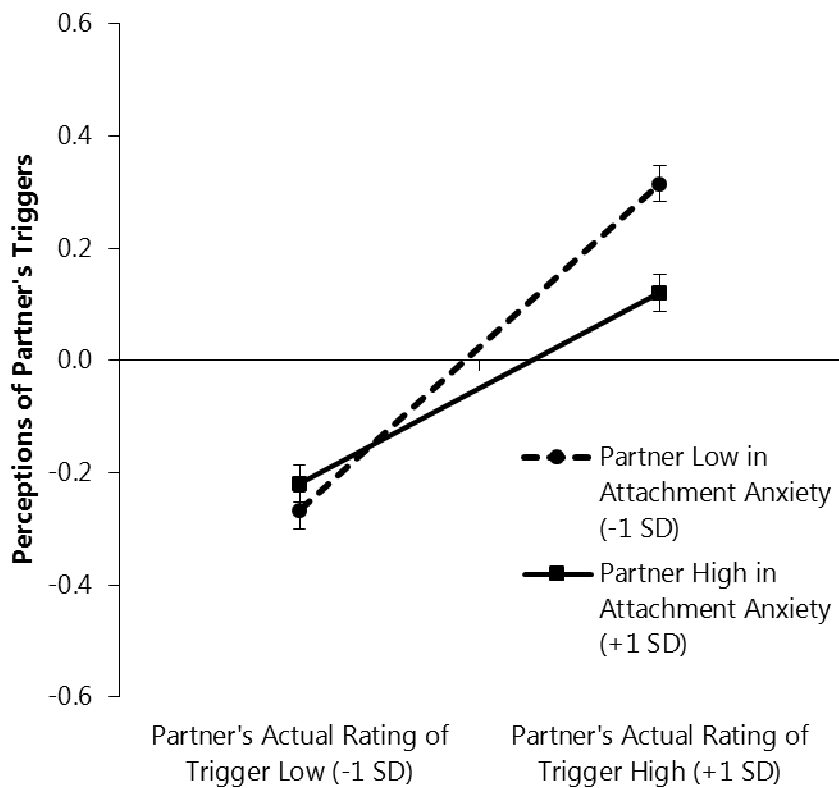
Figure 1. Study 2: Two-way interaction between partner attachment anxiety and tracking accuracy predicting judgments of triggers adjusting for assumed similarity. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.
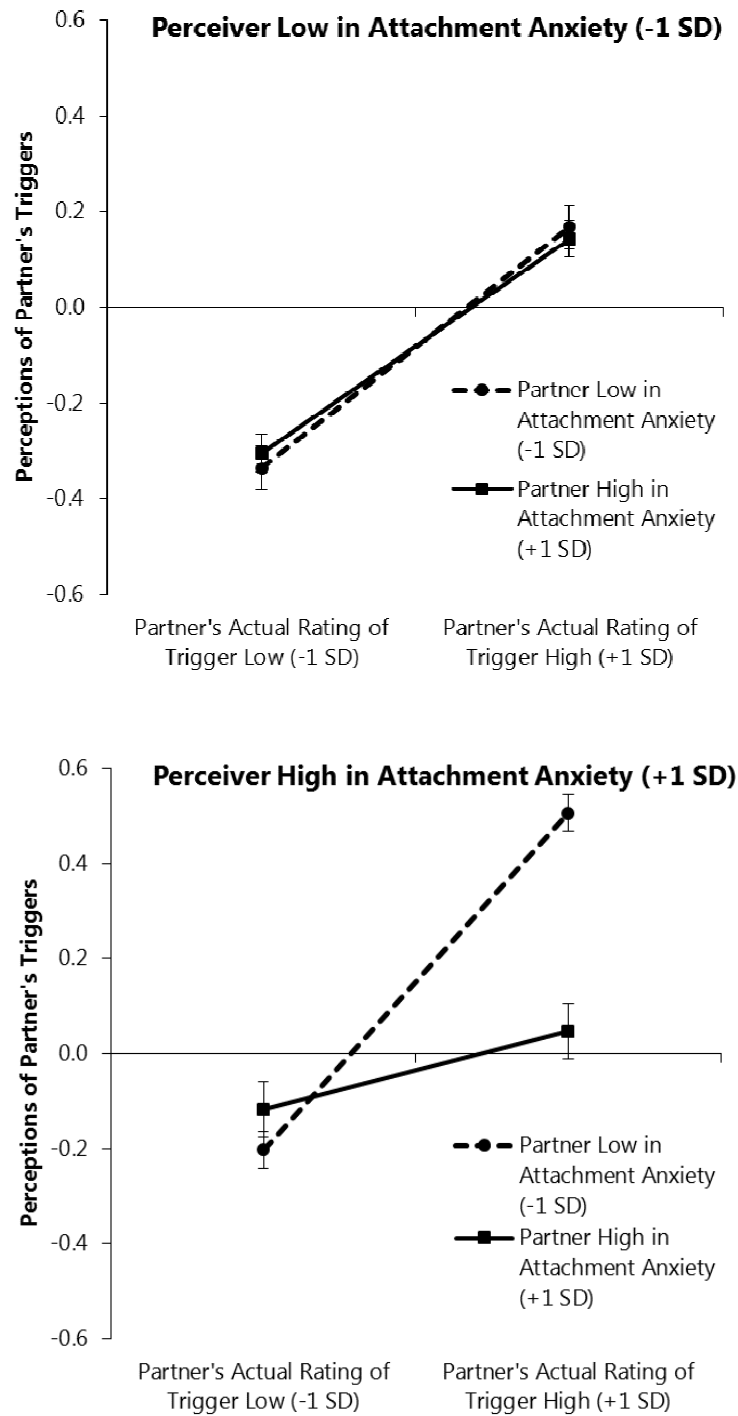
Figure 2. Study 2: Three-way interaction between actor (perceiver) attachment anxiety,

partner attachment anxiety, and tracking accuracy predicting judgments of triggers

adjusting for assumed similarity. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.

3.2.2.1 Testing Hypothesis 2 – Moderation of Bias and Accuracy in Trigger Knowledge by Attachment Avoidance

I then conducted T&B analyses with the main effects of centered actor and partner attachment avoidance (which represent directional bias as a function of attachment avoidance), as well as the interactions between attachment avoidance and tracking accuracy and attachment avoidance assumed similarity, entered as predictor variables. Results from this analysis are presented in Step 1 of Table 6. Contrary to Hypothesis 2 predictions, neither an actor nor a partner effect of attachment avoidance emerged for directional bias, meaning that perceivers and partners' attachment avoidance was not meaningfully associated with systematic overestimation or underestimation of the extent to which their partner was triggered across the 24 irksome behaviors.

Interestingly, a significant interaction emerged between actor attachment avoidance and tracking accuracy. Both more and less avoidantly attached perceivers accurately tracked their partner's pattern of relationship triggers, $b = .12$, $SE = .03$, $t = 3.86$, $p < .001$ and $b = .23$, $SE = .03$, $t = 7.49$, $p < .001$, respectively, though the effect was stronger when the perceiver was less avoidant (see Figure 3). Moreover, a significant interaction emerged between *partner* attachment avoidance and tracking accuracy. Perceivers were able to accurately track the pattern of their partner's triggers irrespective of whether their partner was more or less avoidant, $b = .13$, $SE = .03$, $t = 4.29$, $p < .001$ and $b = .22$, $SE = .03$, $t = 7.17$, $p < .001$, respectively, though the effect was stronger when the partner was less avoidant (see Figure 4).

Lastly, as with the analyses involving attachment anxiety, I conducted exploratory T&B analyses that included the interactions between actor and partner attachment

avoidance predicting directional bias, tracking accuracy, and assumed similarity, the results of which can be seen in Step 2 of Table 6. In these analyses, no interactions between actor and partner attachment avoidance and any of the three perceptual processes were statistically significant.[8]

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[8] Additional analyses that probed the interactions between actor attachment anxiety and partner attachment avoidance, as well as actor attachment avoidance and partner attachment anxiety, predicting directional bias, tracking accuracy, and assumed similarity also did not yield any significant effects.

Table 6

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 2 – Effects of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance on Directional Bias, Tracking Accuracy, and Assumed Similarity of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers

Judgments of Partner's Triggers	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1					
Directional Bias					
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.01	.02	-0.63	-.05, .03	.01
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.02	.02	-0.99	-.06, .02	.02
Tracking Accuracy					
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.05	.02	-2.81**	-.09, -.02	.21
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.04	.02	-2.39*	-.08, -.01	.20
Assumed Similarity					
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.03	.02	-1.25	-.07, .02	.11
Partner Attachment Avoidance	.01	.02	0.41	-.03, .05	.03
Step 2					
Directional Bias					
Actor × Partner Avoidance	-.02	.01	-1.18	-.05, .01	.03
Tracking Accuracy					
Actor × Partner Avoidance	-.03	.02	-1.63	-.07, .01	.18
Assumed Similarity					
Actor × Partner Avoidance	.01	.02	0.35	-.04, .05	.04

Note. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

*p < .05, **p < .01
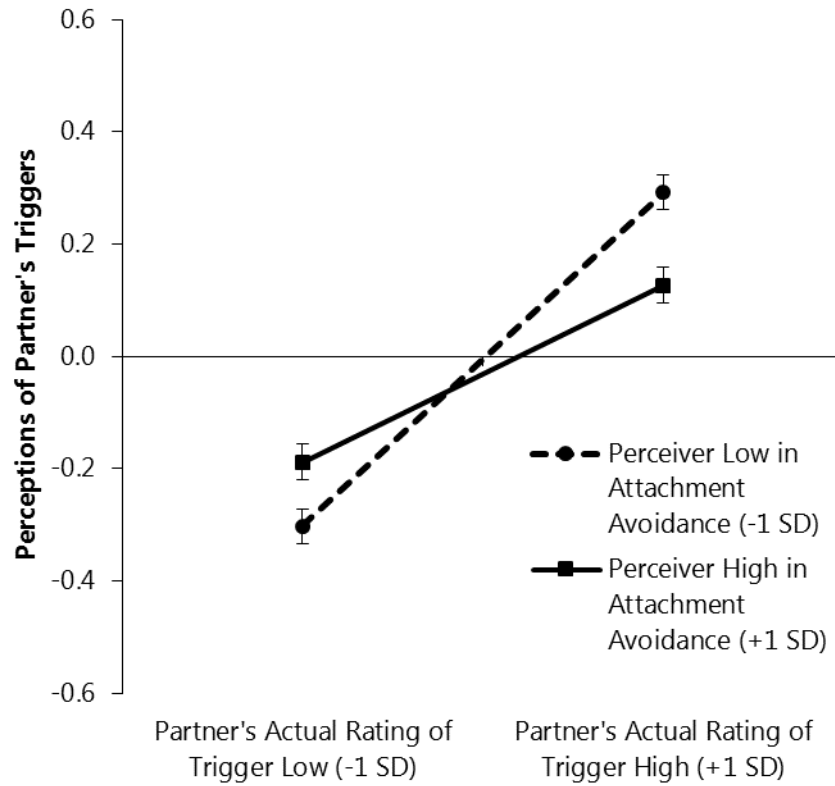
Figure 3. Study 2: Two-way interaction between actor (perceiver) attachment avoidance and tracking accuracy predicting judgments of triggers adjusting for assumed similarity. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.
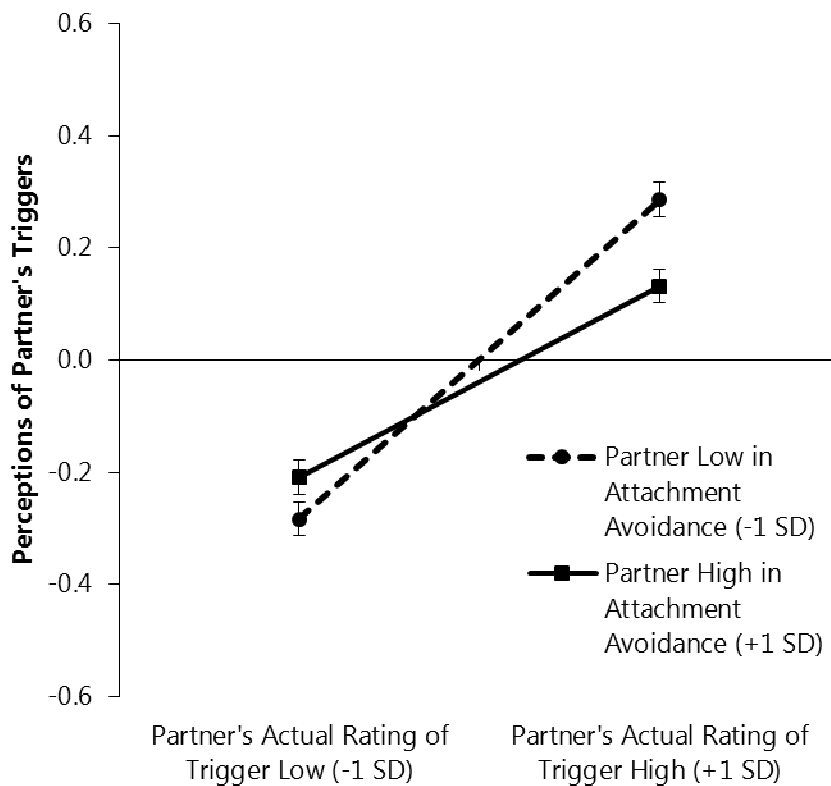
Figure 4. Study 2: Two-way interaction between partner attachment avoidance and tracking accuracy predicting judgments of triggers adjusting for assumed similarity. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.

3.2.3 Testing Hypothesis 3 – Relationship Consequences of Biased and Accurate Trigger Knowledge

I next ran analyses that probed how biased and accurate trigger knowledge might predict relationship satisfaction, feelings of being understood by the partner, and conflict management (agenda-building, arguing, negotiating, and overall). Following initial analyses conducted on the sample as a whole, I ran follow-up tests that included actor and partner attachment anxiety, as well as actor and partner attachment avoidance, as moderating variables. Although there was a robust tendency for actor and partner insecure attachment to be related to less satisfaction, feeling less understood, and poorer conflict management on average, the interactions between attachment and bias and accuracy were sporadic and inconsistent across dependent measures. In other words, the only consistent attachment effects in these models were main effects of actor and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. For this reason, I discuss only those interactions that emerged from analyses that were conducted on the full sample. Models that include attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance as moderators, however, remain presented in Tables 7-19.

3.2.3.1 Relationship Satisfaction

Results for relationship satisfaction can be seen in Tables 7 and 8. The overall model is presented in both tables. Table 7 includes the model that tested moderation of biased and accurate trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment anxiety, and Table 8 includes the model that tested moderation of biased and accurate trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment avoidance.

3.2.3.1.1 Actor Relationship Satisfaction

In this analysis, a significant main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers emerged such that, in general, perceivers who overestimated their partner's pattern of triggers were less satisfied. A marginal main effect of the partner's actual trigger ratings also emerged such that, in general, perceivers whose partners reported higher trigger scores were less satisfied. The interaction between actors' perceptions and partners' actual ratings, however, was not statistically significant.

3.2.3.1.2 Partner Relationship Satisfaction

A marginal main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers emerged such that, in general, perceivers' overestimation of their partner's pattern of triggers was associated with their *partner* feeling more satisfied. A significant main effect of the partner's actual trigger ratings also emerged such that, in general, partners who reported higher trigger scores were less satisfied. Additionally, the interaction between actors' perceptions and partners' actual ratings was significant. When perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers, the partner was less satisfied if the perceiver was incorrect (i.e., if the partner's actual trigger ratings were, in fact, high), $b = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $t = -4.20$, $p < .001$. When perceivers overestimated their partner's triggers, on the other hand, the partner was equally satisfied regardless of whether their actual trigger ratings were low or high, $b = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $t = -1.24$, $p = .22$. Figure 5 displays this interaction.

Table 7

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Relationship Satisfaction (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Relationship Satisfaction					Partner Relationship Satisfaction				
	b	SE	t	95% CI	r	b	SE	t	95% CI	r
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.05	.02	-2.42*	-.09, -.01	.27	.03	.02	1.65+	-.01, .07	.18
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.71+	-.07, .01	.19	-.05	.02	-3.10**	-.08, -.02	.33
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.51	-.01, .03	.17	.02	.01	2.35*	.01, .04	.29
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.13	.01	-16.57***	-.15, -.12	.27	-.11	.01	-13.54***	-.12, -.09	.22
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.11	.01	-14.01***	-.13, -.10	.23	-.12	.01	-14.57***	-.13, -.10	.23
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	-.02	.01	-1.48	-.04, .01	.15	.03	.01	2.81**	.01, .05	.27
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.66	-.03, .02	.07	< .01	.01	0.41	-.02, .03	.04
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.94	-.01, .03	.09	-.01	.01	-0.55	-.03, .02	.06
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.04	.01	3.51***	.02, .06	.33	-.01	.01	-0.72	-.03, .01	.07
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.37	-.01, .01	.03	< .01	.01	0.72	-.01, .02	.07
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.42	-.01, .02	.04	< -.01	.01	-0.73	-.02, .01	.07

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
$^+p < .10$, $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Table 8

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Relationship Satisfaction (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Relationship Satisfaction					Partner Relationship Satisfaction				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.05	.02	-2.42*	-.09, -.01	.27	.03	.02	1.65[+]	-.01, .07	.18
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.71[+]	-.07, .01	.19	-.05	.02	-3.10**	-.08, -.02	.33
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.51	-.01, .03	.17	.02	.01	2.35*	.01, .04	.29
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.27	.01	-32.56***	-.28, -.25	.47	-.07	.01	-8.31***	-.08, -.05	.14
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.07	.01	-8.56***	-.09, -.05	.14	-.26	.01	-31.52***	-.28, -.24	.46
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	-.03	.01	-2.94**	-.06, -.01	.27	.02	.01	1.77[+]	-.01, .04	.16
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.67	-.03, .01	.06	.02	.01	2.09*	.01, .05	.19
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.41	-.01, .04	.13	.01	.01	1.52	-.01, .03	.13
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.37	-.01, .03	.13	-.01	.01	-1.24	-.03, .01	.11
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.65[+]	-.01, .02	.10	.01	.01	1.01	-.01, .02	.08
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	2.07*	.01, .02	.14	< -.01	.01	-0.19	-.01, .01	.02

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
[+]$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$
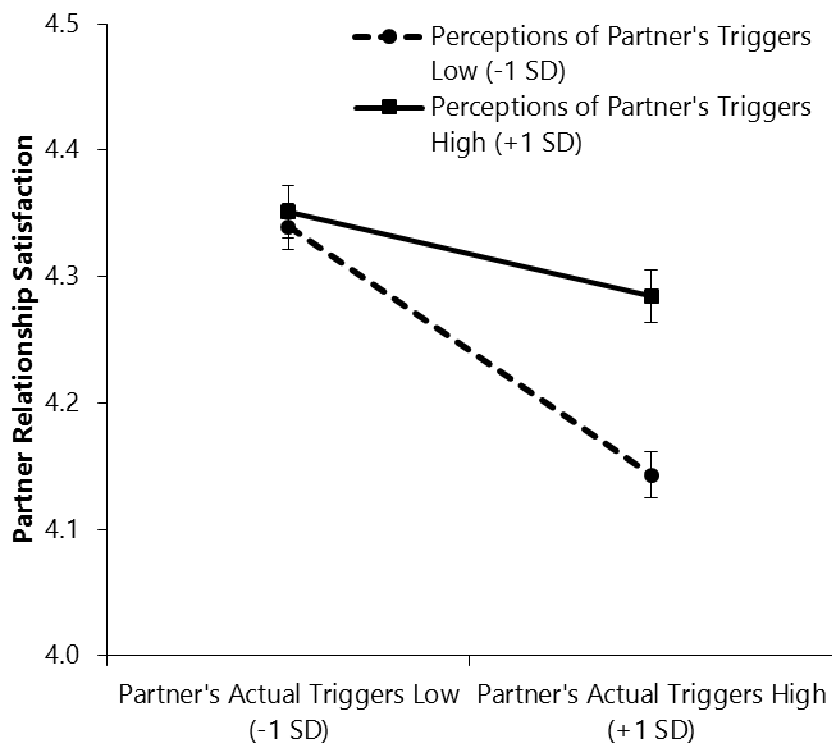
Figure 5. Study 2: Two-way interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual reported triggers predicting partner relationship satisfaction adjusting for perceivers' own reported triggers. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.

3.2.3.2 Feeling Understood

Results for feeling understood by the partner are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

The overall model is presented in both tables. Table 9 includes the model that tested

moderation of biased and accurate trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment

anxiety, and Table 10 includes the model that tested moderation of biased and accurate

trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment avoidance.

3.2.3.2.1 Actor Feeling Understood

In this analysis, the main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers was not

statistically significant. A marginal main effect emerged, however, for the partner's

actual reported triggers such that perceivers whose partner reported higher trigger scores

felt less understood. Moreover, a marginal interaction between actors' perceptions and

partners' actual ratings emerged. When perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers,

the perceiver felt more understood by their partner when their perceptions aligned with

their partner's actual reported triggers (i.e., if the partner's actual trigger ratings were, in

fact, low), $b = -.06$, $SE = .02$, $t = -3.17$, $p = .002$. When perceivers overestimated their

partner's triggers, on the other hand, the perceiver felt understood to a similar degree

regardless of whether their partner's actual trigger ratings were low or high, $b = -.01$, SE

$= .03$, $t = -0.36$, $p = .72$ (see Figure 6).

3.2.3.2.2 Partner Feeling Understood

No statistically significant main effects or interactions emerged from this analysis.

That is, the extent to which partners felt perceivers understood them was not

meaningfully influenced by perceivers' biased and accurate trigger knowledge.

Table 9

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Feelings of Being Understood (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Feeling Understood					Partner Feeling Understood				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.44	-.07, .01	.16	.01	.02	0.24	-.04, .05	.03
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.04	.02	-1.81⁺	-.08, .01	.20	-.02	.02	-0.88	-.06, -.02	.10
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.82⁺	-.01, .04	.21	.02	.01	1.63	-.01, .04	.19
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.04	.01	-4.46***	-.06 -.02	.07	-.08	.01	-8.94***	-.10, -.06	.15
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.07	.01	-8.04***	-.09, -.06	.13	-.03	.01	-2.89**	-.04, -.01	.05
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	< .01	.01	0.05	-.03, .03	.01	.01	.01	0.92	-.01, .04	.09
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	< -.01	.01	-0.12	-.03, .02	.01	-.02	.01	-1.78⁺	-.05, .01	.17
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.85	-.04, .01	.08	.01	.01	0.89	-.01, .04	.09
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.54	-.01, .04	.15	< .01	.01	0.21	-.02, .03	.02
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.08	-.01, .02	.01	.01	.01	1.01	-.01, .02	.10
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.91	-.01, .02	.09	-.01	.01	-1.35	-.03, .01	.13

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
⁺$p < .10$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 10

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Feelings of Being Understood (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Feeling Understood					Partner Feeling Understood				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.44	-.07, .01	.16	.01	.02	0.24	-.04, .05	.03
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.04	.02	-1.81⁺	-.08, .01	.20	-.02	.02	-0.88	-.06, -.02	.10
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.82⁺	-.01, .04	.21	.02	.01	1.63	-.01, .04	.19
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.20	.01	-19.68***	-.22, -.18	.32	-.01	.01	-1.41	-.03, .01	.02
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.02	.01	-1.57	-.04, .01	.03	-.20	.01	-19.39***	-.22, -.18	.32
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	-.05	.01	-3.45***	-.07, -.02	.30	.01	.01	1.30	-.01, .04	.12
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	.01	.01	0.90	-.01, .04	.08	.01	.01	0.38	-.02, .03	.03
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.38	-.02, .03	.03	.02	.01	1.22	-.01, .04	.11
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.89	-.01, .04	.08	-.02	.01	-1.28	-.04, .01	.12
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.31	-.01, .02	.02	< -.01	.01	-0.22	-.02, .02	.02
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	1.13	-.01, .02	.09	< .01	.01	0.16	-.02, .02	.01

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
⁺$p < .10$, ***$p < .001$
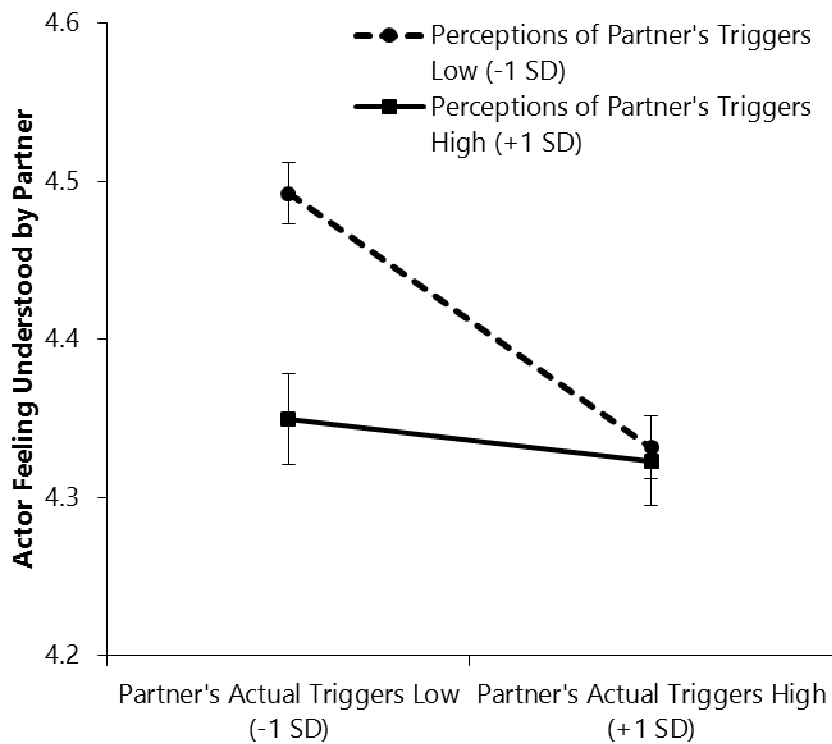
Figure 6. Study 2: Two-way interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual reported triggers predicting actor (perceiver) feelings of being understood by the partner adjusting for perceivers' own reported triggers. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.

3.2.3.3 Conflict Management

Results for agenda-building are presented in Tables 11 and 12. Arguing results can be seen in Tables 13 and 14, negotiating results can be seen in Tables 15 and 16, and the results from analyses containing the combined conflict management score are presented in Tables 17 and 18. The overall model is presented in each relevant table. Tables 11, 13, 15, and 17 include models that tested moderation of biased and accurate trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment anxiety, and Tables 12, 14, 16, and 18 include models that tested moderation of biased and accurate trigger knowledge by actor and partner attachment avoidance. A summary of all relationship consequences analyses containing both overall models and models testing attachment moderation is displayed in Table 19.

3.2.3.3.1 Actor and Partner Agenda-Building

In this analysis, the only statistically significant effect to emerge was the main effect of the partner's actual reported triggers such that perceivers whose partners reported higher trigger scores (and the partners themselves) had less healthy agenda-building during conflict. No other main or interaction effects emerged, suggesting that actor and partner agenda-building is not meaningfully influenced by perceivers' biased and accurate trigger knowledge.

3.2.3.3.2 Actor Arguing

A main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers emerged such that perceivers who overestimated their partner's triggers reported less healthy arguing during conflict. A main effect also emerged for the partner's actual triggers such that perceivers whose

partner reported higher triggers had less healthy arguing. The interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual reports, however, was not statistically significant.

3.2.3.3.3 Partner Arguing

Results revealed a marginal main effect of the partner's actual triggers such that partners who reported higher triggers had less healthy arguing; no other main or interaction effects emerged. In other words, a partner's reported arguing behavior during conflict was not meaningfully influenced by perceivers' biased and accurate trigger knowledge.

3.2.3.3.4 Actor Negotiating

In this analysis, results revealed a significant main effect of the partner's actual triggers such that perceivers whose partners reported higher triggers had less healthy negotiating; no other main or interaction effects emerged. In other words, a perceiver's reported negotiating behavior during conflict was not meaningfully influenced by their biased and accurate knowledge of their partner's triggers.

3.2.3.3.5 Partner Negotiating

The main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers was not statistically significant. Nonetheless, a significant main effect of the partner's actual triggers emerged such that partners who reported higher triggers had less healthy negotiating. Moreover, the interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual trigger ratings was significant. As displayed in Figure 7, when perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers, the partner reported less healthy negotiation if the perceiver was

incorrect (i.e., if the partner's actual trigger ratings were, in fact, high), $b = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $t = -3.81$, $p < .001$. When perceivers overestimated their partner's triggers, on the other hand, the partner was reported similar negotiating behavior regardless of whether their actual trigger ratings were low or high, $b < -.01$, $SE = .03$, $t = -0.06$, $p = .95$.

3.2.3.3.6 Actor Overall Conflict Management

In this analysis, results revealed a significant main effect of the partner's actual triggers such that perceivers whose partners reported higher triggers had less healthy conflict management overall; no other main or interaction effects emerged. In other words, a perceiver's reported conflict management was not meaningfully influenced by their biased and accurate knowledge of their partner's triggers.

3.2.3.3.7 Partner Overall Conflict Management

The main effect of perceptions of the partner's triggers was not statistically significant. A significant main effect of the partner's actual triggers, however, emerged such that partners who reported higher triggers had less healthy conflict management overall. Additionally, the interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual trigger ratings was marginally significant. When perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers, the partner reported less healthy conflict management if the perceiver was incorrect (i.e., if the partner's actual trigger ratings were, in fact, high), $b = -.07$, $SE = .02$, $t = -3.58$, $p = .001$. When perceivers overestimated their partner's triggers, on the other hand, the partner was reported similar conflict management regardless of whether their actual trigger ratings were low or high, $b = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $t = -1.05$, $p = .30$ (see Figure 8).

Table 11

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Agenda-Building (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Agenda-Building					Partner Agenda-Building				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.04	.03	-1.47	-.09, .01	.16	-.02	.03	-0.63	-.07, .03	.07
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.11	.02	-4.70***	-.15, -.06	.46	-.07	.02	-3.26***	-.11, -.03	.34
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.09	-.03, .03	.01	.01	.01	0.83	-.02, .04	.09
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.11	.01	-10.70***	-.14, -.09	.18	-.05	.01	-4.37***	-.07, -.03	.07
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.05	.01	-4.48***	-.07, -.03	.07	-.12	.01	-11.32***	-.14, -.10	.18
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	-.01	.02	-0.59	-.04, .02	.06	< -.01	.02	-0.09	-.03, .03	.01
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	.01	.02	0.37	-.03, .04	.04	-.02	.02	-1.41	-.05, .01	.14
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.43	-.03, .02	.04	.01	.01	0.39	-.02, .03	.04
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.66	-.02, .04	.06	.01	.01	1.06	-.01, .04	.10
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.28	-.03, .01	.12	< .01	.01	0.22	-.02, .02	.02
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.72	-.01, .02	.07	-.02	.01	-2.78**	-.04, -.01	.24

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 12

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Agenda-Building (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Agenda-Building					Partner Agenda-Building				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.04	.03	-1.47	-.09, .01	.16	-.02	.03	-0.63	-.07, .03	.07
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.11	.02	-4.70***	-.15, -.06	.46	-.07	.02	-3.26***	-.11, -.03	.34
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.09	-.03, .03	.01	.01	.01	0.83	-.02, .04	.09
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.13	.01	-10.62***	-.15, -.11	.17	-.03	.01	-2.76**	-.06, -.01	.05
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.03	.01	-2.45**	-.05, -.01	.04	-.14	.01	-11.22***	-.16, -.11	.18
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	< .01	.02	0.19	-.03, .04	.02	.03	.02	1.71+	-.01, .06	.16
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	-.01	.02	-0.40	-.04, .03	.04	-.03	.02	-2.05*	-.07, -.01	.19
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	-.03	.02	-2.22*	-.07, -.01	.20	.01	.02	0.66	-.02, .04	.06
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	.02	.02	0.98	-.02, .05	.09	.04	.02	2.69**	.01, .07	.24
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.02	.01	-1.91+	-.04, .01	.15	-.01	.01	-0.70	-.03, .01	.05
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.51	-.02, .01	.04	-.01	.01	-1.21	-.03, .01	.10

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
+p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 13

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Arguing (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Arguing					Partner Arguing				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.04	.02	-1.72[+]	-.08, .01	.19	-.03	.02	-1.51	-.06, .01	.17
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.10	.02	-5.46***	-.13, -.06	.52	-.04	.02	-1.96[+]	-.08, .01	.21
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.13	-.02, .03	.02	.02	.01	1.35	-.01, .04	.15
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.11	.01	-13.18***	-.13, -.10	.22	-.10	.01	-11.15***	-.11, -.08	.19
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.10	.01	-11.03***	-.11, -.08	.18	-.11	.01	-12.99***	-.13, -.10	.22
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.69	-.03, .02	.07	-.02	.01	-1.62	-.04, .01	.15
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	< .01	.01	0.26	-.02, .03	.03	-.01	.01	-1.04	-.03, .01	.10
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.07	-.02, .02	.01	.01	.01	0.47	-.02, .03	.05
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.58	-.03, .02	.06	.01	.01	0.85	-.01, .03	.08
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.74	-.02, .01	.07	< .01	.01	0.10	-.01, .02	.01
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.11	-.02, .01	.01	-.01	.01	-1.21	-.02, .01	.11

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
[+]$p < .10$, ***$p < .001$

Table 14

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Arguing (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Arguing					Partner Arguing				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.04	.02	-1.72[+]	-.08, .01	.19	-.03	.02	-1.51	-.06, .01	.17
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.10	.02	-5.46***	-.13, -.06	.52	-.04	.02	-1.96[+]	-.08, .01	.21
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.13	-.02, .03	.02	.02	.01	1.35	-.01, .04	.15
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.17	.01	-17.26***	-.19, -.15	.28	< -.01	.01	-0.12	-.02, .02	< .01
Partner Attachment Avoidance	< -.01	.01	-0.05	-.02, .02	< .01	-.18	.01	-17.93***	-.20, -.16	.29
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.48	-.03, .02	.04	-.01	.01	-0.85	-.04, .01	.08
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	.02	.01	1.12	-.01, .04	.10	< -.01	.01	-0.19	-.03, .02	.02
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.19	-.02, .03	.02	.02	.01	1.94[+]	-.01, .05	.17
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.17	-.04, .01	.11	.02	.01	1.85[+]	-.01, .05	.17
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.69	-.02, .01	.06	-.01	.01	-1.71[+]	-.03, .01	.13
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.23	-.03, .01	.11	< -.01	.01	-0.24	-.02, .01	.02

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
[+]$p < .10$, ***$p < .001$

Table 15

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Negotiating (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Negotiating					Partner Negotiating				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.40	-.08, .01	.16	-.01	.02	-0.34	-.05, .03	.04
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.07	.02	-3.72***	-.11, -.03	.39	-.04	.02	-2.12*	-.08, -.01	.47
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.29	-.01, .04	.15	.03	.01	3.08**	.01, .05	.32
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.11	.01	-13.30***	-.13, -.10	.21	-.09	.01	-10.26***	-.11, -.07	.17
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.10	.01	-11.56***	-.12, -.08	.19	-.11	.01	-12.58***	-.13, -.09	.20
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	-.02	.01	-1.28	-.04, .01	.13	.02	.01	1.39	-.01, .04	.14
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	.01	.01	0.85	-.02, .04	.09	-.01	.01	-0.73	-.03, .02	.07
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.06	-.02, .02	.01	.01	.01	0.78	-.01, .03	.08
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.94[+]	-.01, .05	.19	< .01	.01	0.38	-.02, .03	.04
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.28	-.02, .01	.03	.02	.01	2.95**	.01, .03	.25
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	2.24*	.01, .03	.21	< -.01	.01	-0.60	-.02, .01	.05

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{(t^2/(t^2 + df))}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
$^+p < .10$, $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Table 16

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Negotiating (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Negotiating					Partner Negotiating				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.40	-.08, .01	.16	-.01	.02	-0.34	-.05, .03	.04
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.07	.02	-3.72***	-.11, -.03	.39	-.04	.02	-2.12*	-.08, -.01	.47
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.02	.01	1.29	-.01, .04	.15	.03	.01	3.08**	.01, .05	.32
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.17	.01	-17.66***	-.19, -.15	.28	.01	.01	1.39	-.01, .03	.05
Partner Attachment Avoidance	< .01	.01	0.42	-.02, .02	.01	-.17	.01	-17.30***	-.19, -.15	.28
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.69	-.04, .02	.07	.01	.01	0.82	-.02, .04	.08
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	.01	.01	0.44	-.02, .04	.04	-.02	.01	-1.50	-.05, .01	.14
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.98	-.04, .01	.09	.01	.01	0.88	-.01, .04	.08
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.61	-.02, .03	.06	.01	.01	0.56	-.02, .03	.05
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.14	-.03, .01	.10	-.01	.01	-1.28	-.03, .01	.09
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.69	-.02, .01	.06	-.01	.01	-1.05	-.02, .01	.08

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 17

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Overall Conflict Management (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety (Step 2)

	Actor Overall Conflict Management					Partner Overall Conflict Management				
	b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.62	-.08, .01	.18	-.02	.02	-0.89	-.05, .02	.10
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.09	.02	-5.24***	-.13, -.06	.51	-.05	.02	-2.74**	-.08, -.01	.29
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.42	-.02, .03	.05	.02	.01	1.81+	-.01, .04	.20
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Anxiety	-.11	.01	-13.68***	-.13, -.10	.22	-.08	.01	-9.56***	-.10, -.06	.16
Partner Attachment Anxiety	-.08	.01	-9.95***	-.10, -.07	.16	-.11	.01	-13.68***	-.13, -.10	.22
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions	-.01	.01	-0.88	-.04, .01	.09	< -.01	.01	-0.18	-.03, .02	.02
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions	.01	.01	0.51	-.02, .03	.05	-.01	.01	-1.20	-.04, .01	.12
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers	< -.01	.01	-0.20	-.02, .02	.02	.01	.01	0.56	-.02, .03	.05
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.69	-.01, .03	.07	.01	.01	0.95	-.01, .03	.09
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.85	-.02, .01	.08	.01	.01	1.03	-.01, .02	.09
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	.01	.01	0.88	-.01, .02	.08	-.01	.01	-1.72+	-.03, .01	.15

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
+$p < .10$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 18

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Overall Conflict Management (Step 1) as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Avoidance (Step 2)

	Actor Overall Conflict Management					Partner Overall Conflict Management				
	b	SE	t	95% CI	r	b	SE	t	95% CI	r
Step 1										
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	-.03	.02	-1.62	-.08, .01	.18	-.02	.02	-0.89	-.05, .02	.10
Partner's Actual Triggers	-.09	.02	-5.24***	-.13, -.06	.51	-.05	.02	-2.74**	-.08, -.01	.29
Perceptions × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.42	-.02, .03	.05	.02	.01	1.81+	-.01, .04	.20
Step 2										
Actor Attachment Avoidance	-.16	.01	-16.90***	-.18, -.14	.27	-.01	.01	-0.62	-.02, .01	.01
Partner Attachment Avoidance	-.01	.01	-0.75	-.03, .01	.01	-.17	.01	-17.36***	-.18, -.15	.28
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	< -.01	.01	-0.30	-.03, .02	.03	.01	.01	0.60	-.02, .03	.06
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions	.01	.01	0.43	-.02, .03	.04	-.02	.01	-1.40	-.04, .01	.13
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.15	-.04, .01	.10	.02	.01	1.31	-.01, .04	.12
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers	< .01	.01	0.04	-.02, .02	< .01	.02	.01	2.03*	.01, .05	.18
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-1.25	-.03, .01	.11	-.01	.01	-1.42	-.03, .01	.11
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	-.01	.01	-0.92	-.02, .01	.08	-.01	.01	-0.82	-.02, .01	.07

Note. Analyses control for actors' own reports of triggers to reflect potential assumed similarity. Significance levels are given for each predictor at the initial entry in the model. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
+$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 19

Study 2: Testing Hypothesis 3 – Summary of Effects of Perceptions of the Partner's Triggers on Actor and Partner Relationship Outcomes as a Function of Actor and Partner Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance

	ARS	PRS	AFU	PFU	AAB	PAB	AA	PA	AN	PN	ACM	PCM
Perceptions of Partner's Triggers	*	+					+					
Partner's Actual Triggers	+	**	+		***	***	***	+	***	*	***	**
Perceptions × Actual Triggers		*	+						**			+
Actor Attachment Anxiety	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Partner Attachment Anxiety	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Actor Attachment Avoidance	***	***	***		***	**	***		***		***	
Partner Attachment Avoidance	***	***		***	**	***		***		***		***
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions		**										
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions				+								
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions	**	+	***			+						
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions		*				*						
Actor Anxiety × Actual Triggers												
Partner Anxiety × Actual Triggers	***								+			
Actor Avoidance × Actual Triggers					*			+				
Partner Avoidance × Actual Triggers						**		+				*
Actor Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers										**		
Partner Anxiety × Perceptions × Actual Triggers						**				*		+
Actor Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	+				+			+				
Partner Avoidance × Perceptions × Actual Triggers	*											

Note. ARS = actor relationship satisfaction; PRS = partner relationship satisfaction; AFU = actor feeling understood; PFU = partner feeling understood; AAB = actor agenda-building; PAB = partner agenda-building; AA = actor arguing; PA = partner arguing; AN = actor negotiating; PN = partner negotiating; ACM = actor overall conflict management; PCM = partner overall conflict management

$^+p < .10$, $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$
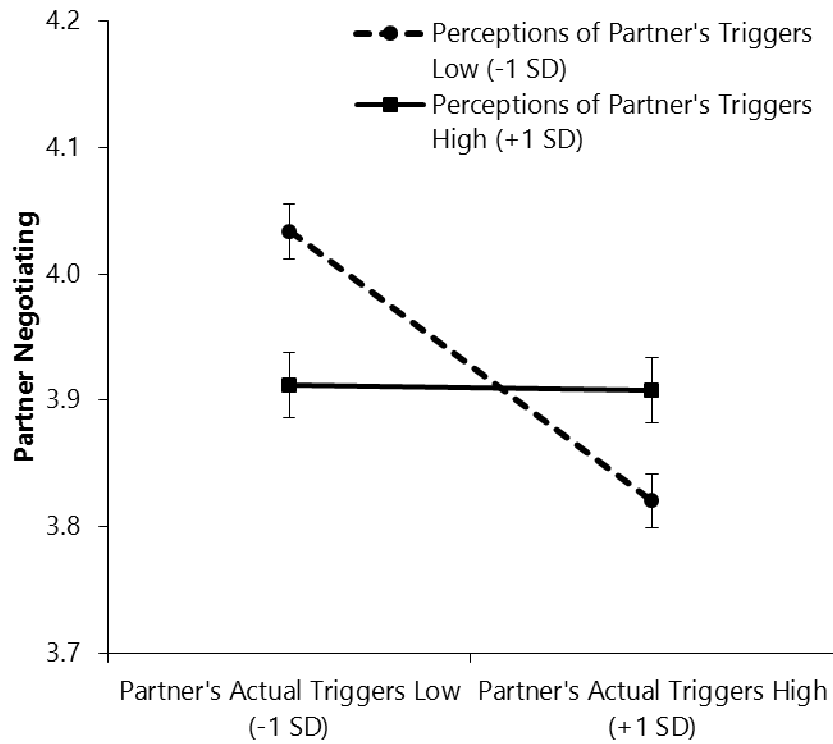
Figure 7. Study 2: Two-way interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual reported triggers predicting partner negotiating adjusting for perceivers' own reported triggers. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.
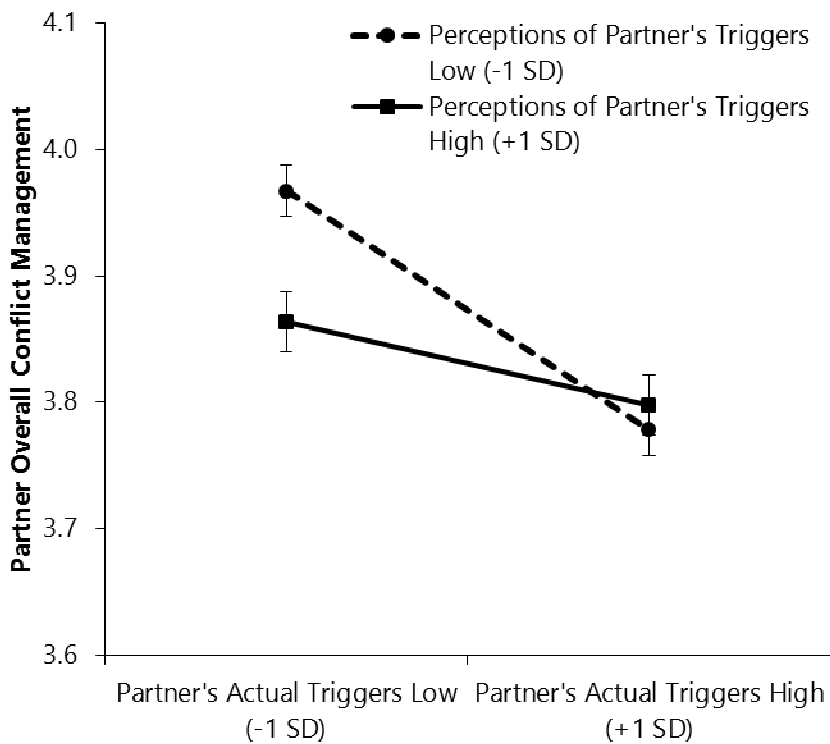
Figure 8. Study 2: Two-way interaction between perceptions of the partner's triggers and the partner's actual reported triggers predicting partner overall conflict management adjusting for perceivers' own reported triggers. Error bars represent ± 1 standard error of the mean.

3.2.4 Auxiliary Analyses

Auxiliary analyses were conducted with gender, age, and relationship length. Results revealed that there were no meaningful differences between men and women in directional bias, tracking accuracy, or assumed similarity. Neither men nor women demonstrated directional bias, and both men and women drew on the truth and bias forces to a similar extent. The results from the analyses with gender are presented in Table 19. Bias and accuracy also did not vary as a function of actor and partner age (see Table 20) or relationship length (see Table 21).

Table 20
Study 2: Auxiliary Analysis with Gender

Judgments of Partner's Triggers	b	SE	t	95% CI	r
Directional Bias					
Men	.02	.07	0.27	-.11, .15	.03
Women	-.05	.06	-0.82	-.17, .07	.10
Gender Difference	.03	.05	0.58	-.07, .13	.07
Tracking Accuracy					
Men	.20	.03	7.05***	.14, .26	.64
Women	.18	.03	6.91***	.13, .23	.65
Gender Difference	-.01	.02	-0.35	-.05, .03	.04
Assumed Similarity					
Men	.21	.03	6.78***	.15, .27	.60
Women	.24	.03	6.99***	.17, .31	.61
Gender Difference	< .01	.02	0.14	-.05, .05	.02

Note. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).
***$p < .001$

Table 21
Study 2: Auxiliary Analysis with Age

Judgments of Partner's Triggers	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Directional Bias					
Actor Age	< .01	.01	0.25	-.01, .02	.01
Partner Age	-.01	.01	-0.87	-.02, .01	.02
Tracking Accuracy					
Actor Age	-.01	.01	-1.23	-.02, .01	.03
Partner Age	< .01	.01	0.49	-.01, .01	.01
Assumed Similarity					
Actor Age	< .01	.01	0.63	-.01, .01	.01
Partner Age	-.01	.01	-1.18	-.02, .01	.02

Note. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

Table 22
Study 2: Auxiliary Analysis with Relationship Length

Judgments of Partner's Triggers as a Function of Relationship Length	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*r*
Directional Bias	< .01	< .01	0.92	-.01, .01	.02
Tracking Accuracy	< .01	< .01	0.48	-.01, .01	.05
Assumed Similarity	< -.01	< .01	-0.07	-.01, .01	.01

Note. Approximate effect sizes were computed using the formula $r = \sqrt{t^2/(t^2 + df)}$ (see Overall & Hammond, 2013; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2007).

3.3 Discussion

Study 2 supported Hypothesis 1 by demonstrating that romantic partners are able to accurately track each other's particular pattern of relationship triggers, adjusting for their tendency to project their feelings onto their partner (i.e., assumed similarity). My prediction that partners would exhibit overestimation (i.e., positive directional bias) in their judgments of triggers, however, was not supported; instead, partners did not exhibit directional bias at all. From an error management theory perspective, it could be that the costs associated with underestimation and overestimation errors when making judgments of behaviors that trigger a partner are relatively equal, as opposed to the costs of one type of error outweighing the costs of the other; I explore this possibility in more detail in Chapter 4, the general discussion.

Hypothesis 2 also received partial support. As expected, individuals who were more anxiously attached overestimated the extent to which the 24 behaviors triggered their romantic partner. Those with a more anxiously attached partner, on the other hand, marginally underestimated their more anxious partner's triggers. It may be that more anxious persons do not directly communicate about the behaviors that bother them (cf. Anders & Tucker, 2000), and thus their partners simply do not know just how upsetting certain behaviors are for their more anxious partner. A surprising finding emerged from these analyses; specifically, more anxious persons did not demonstrate high tracking accuracy. This contradicts the established notion that individuals who score high on attachment anxiety are better able to infer their partner's thoughts and feelings (see Simpson et al., 1992, 2011). Nonetheless, more anxious persons were able to track the pattern of their partner's triggers when they had a less anxious partner. Based on these

data, less anxious persons appear to be both easily tracked by partners and also adept at accurate tracking. It may be that in prior studies, which mostly involve conflict, support, or potentially threatening situations (e.g., attractive alternative partners), the surrounding context may activate the attachment system for more anxious individuals, allowing them to hone in on things that are relevant to the relationship (e.g., their partner's thoughts and feelings). In the current Study 2, it is possible that the relationship trigger questionnaire did not activate the attachment system. It is also possible that the relationship judgments made by more anxious individuals are driven more by directional bias than tracking accuracy; indeed, the present research is the first to test, through the lens of attachment theory, bias and accuracy perceptual processes simultaneously.

Attachment avoidance predictions within Hypothesis 2 were almost entirely unsupported. Neither more avoidantly attached individuals nor their partners demonstrated directional bias. Additionally, both more avoidant persons and their partners exhibited high tracking accuracy of each other's triggers, though effects were strongest when the perceiver making the judgments or the partner being judged scored lower on attachment avoidance. Previous findings that have shown more avoidant persons to be less accurate when inferring their partner's thoughts and feelings (e.g., Simpson et al., 2011). The high accuracy findings that emerged in the current Study 2, however, may have occurred because the trigger questionnaire did not activate the attachment system and thus more avoidant persons did not deactivate their attachment-related thoughts. Another possible explanation is that less avoidant persons are direct and open communicators about their thoughts and feelings, making them easy to perceive accurately even when the perceiver is more avoidant.

Results from analyses related to Hypothesis 3 revealed that the interplay of bias and accuracy is important in predicting some (but not all) of the relationship outcomes explored in the present research. In particular, a partner's satisfaction level, negotiating behavior during conflict, and overall conflict management are informed by the perceivers' judgments of their relationship triggers. A partner's feelings of being understood by the perceiver do not appear to be informed by perceivers' biased and accurate trigger knowledge. Other than feelings of being understood by their partner, actor (perceiver) relationship outcomes seem to be unaffected by the perceiver's biased and accurate trigger knowledge.

In most cases, relationship outcome effects were driven by perceiver *under*estimation rather than overestimation, contrary to my original predictions. That is, when perceivers overestimated their partner's triggers, the actual trigger ratings reported by their partner did not influence the relationship outcome (e.g., partners reported similar levels of satisfaction when perceivers overestimated their triggers, regardless of whether their actual reports of triggers were low or high). When perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers, in contrast, this negative directional bias was associated with salutary outcomes when it aligned correctly with a partner's low trigger ratings, but underestimation was associated with deleterious outcomes when it aligned incorrectly with a partner's high trigger ratings. Moreover, the precise driving force that underlies the interplay of bias and accuracy in these types of judgments may vary with the relationship dynamic being explored; for example, partner level of satisfaction was high in all cases except when perceivers (incorrectly) underestimated the partner's high

triggers, whereas partner overall conflict management seemed to be particularly healthy when perceivers (correctly) underestimated the partner's low triggers.

Finally, auxiliary analyses that included gender, age, and relationship length indicated that these potential covariates did not yield significant differences, suggesting that they did not meaningfully influence bias and accuracy in judgments of relationship triggers in this sample.

Chapter 4

4 General Discussion

Two preregistered studies investigated the hitherto unexplored interplay between directional bias and tracking accuracy in romantic partners' perceptions of each other's relationship triggers, irksome or hurtful behaviors that activate negative emotions (e.g., dishonesty). Study 1 identified 24 relationship triggers that the general public considered to be important for predicting relationship outcomes. Study 2 used the recently developed T&B Model of judgment (West & Kenny, 2011) and simultaneously tested whether partners were able to track the unique pattern of each other's triggers, as well as if they overestimated or underestimated the extent to which a given behavior irked one another. Study 2 also explored whether bias and accuracy in trigger perception was moderated by attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, two individual difference variables shown previously to be related to accurate and inaccurate perception of romantic partners, respectively (Simpson et al., 2011). Finally, Study 2 examined the potential relationship consequences of perceivers' biased and accurate trigger knowledge.

Results revealed that, adjusting for the tendency for perceivers to use their own feelings as an anchor for their judgments of their partner (i.e., assumed similarity[9]), perceivers indeed accurately tracked their partner's relationship triggers. Perceivers did not, however, demonstrate directional bias; that is, they neither systematically overestimated nor underestimated the extent to which each trigger angered their partner.

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[9] Although not part of the primary goal of this research, results from Study 2 suggest that perceivers assume similarity (i.e., they project their own feelings onto their partner) when making judgments of the behaviors that trigger their partner. Thus, it may be that partners are inherently similar to some degree when it comes to the types of relationship behaviors that upset them, a finding that also dovetails with prior studies (e.g., Kenny & Acitelli, 2001).

These results remained robust when statistically controlling for gender, age, and relationship length. The finding that perceivers exhibit tracking accuracy in trigger judgments fits well with self-verification theory (see Swann, 2012). Previous research has found that people respond positively when they feel a romantic partner "gets" them (e.g., Lackenbauer et al., 2010). Moreover, partners should be particularly motivated to have accurate knowledge of the behaviors that trigger each other, since this could help avoid unnecessary conflict or promote more positive conflict management (cf. Campbell & Stanton, 2013; Holmes & Murray, 1996). The robust tracking accuracy demonstrated by the sample as a whole provides further support of these theoretical notions.

I initially predicted that, overall, partners would exhibit positive directional bias (i.e., overestimation) of each other's triggers, as it appeared to me that the costs of erroneous judgments related to triggers would be asymmetric (see Haselton & Buss, 2000) and, therefore, perceiving a trigger to be present when in truth it was absent would be less costly than failing to perceive a trigger that exists in truth. In Study 2, however, partners did not demonstrate directional bias. Thus, it may be that the costs associated with false positive (overestimation) and incorrect rejection (underestimation) judgments of triggers are not, in fact, asymmetric. In other words, from the perspective of error management theory (Haselton & Buss, 2000; Haselton & Galperin, 2013), it could be that underestimation and overestimation of a partner's relationship triggers have relatively equal costs. It may then be adaptive to, on average, underestimate low triggers (behaviors that do not trigger a partner very much) and overestimate high triggers (behaviors that trigger a partner very much). Alternately, it may be that for certain types of triggering behaviors, underestimation is particularly good and overestimation is particularly bad.

Results from Study 2 analyses probing the relationship consequences of biased and accurate trigger knowledge provide potential insight into this notion. Specifically, the partner's relationship satisfaction, negotiating behavior in conflict, and overall conflict management, in addition to the actor's (perceiver's) feelings of being understood,[10] were predicted by the interplay of bias and accuracy in judgments of relationship triggers. When perceivers overestimated their partner's triggers, the actual trigger ratings reported by their partner did not influence the relationship outcome (i.e., partners reported similar levels of relationship satisfaction, negotiating behavior, and overall conflict management when perceivers overestimated their triggers, regardless of whether the partner's actual reports of triggers were low or high). On the other hand, when perceivers underestimated their partner's triggers, the partner's actual trigger ratings did influence the relationship outcome. In particular, when a perceiver's underestimation aligned accurately with a partner's low trigger ratings, partners reported higher relationship satisfaction and healthier negotiating behavior and overall conflict management compared to when a perceiver's underestimation aligned incorrectly with a partner's high trigger ratings.

These effects, however, may be slightly nuanced. That is, it appears that sometimes the difference that results from the interaction of bias and accuracy in trigger knowledge emerges primarily when a perceiver's low perceptions align correctly with a partner's low trigger ratings (in the case of perceivers feeling more understood, and the partner's negotiating behavior and overall conflict management), whereas at other times the difference resulting from this interaction is particularly strong when a perceiver's

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[10] This effect was the only actor (perceiver) relationship outcome dependent measure that emerged across all analyses, and the effect was marginal. For these reasons, I focus the majority of my discussion on the partner's relationship outcomes, which were more consistent.

underestimation misaligns with a partner's high trigger ratings (in the case of the partner's relationship satisfaction). These differences may emerge from psychological differences involved in the outcome; for instance, global relationship satisfaction tends to be very high on average (see Myers, 2000; Parker-Pope, 2010), so partners may be similarly satisfied *except* when they possess more severe triggers and the perceiver is not attuned to that reality. Conversely, conflict behavior (e.g., negotiating and overall conflict management) arises in a specific situation with the potential to involve negativity (Holmes & Murray, 1996), and thus partners whose high trigger ratings are underestimated by a perceiver may behave similarly to partners whose low and high trigger ratings are overestimated by a perceiver, but partners are able to resolve conflict especially well when their low trigger ratings are correctly detected by a perceiver.

The take-home message, then, appears to be that underestimation of a partner's triggers predicts more salutary relationship outcomes when it correctly aligns with the partner's less severe triggers compared to when it incorrectly aligns with the partner's more severe triggers. Thus, the relationship outcome results provide some support for the notion described earlier in the general discussion; namely, that underestimation of less severe triggers may be adaptive. Nonetheless, because underestimation that is misaligned with a partner's high triggers appears to be detrimental for relationship outcomes, an overall tendency to systematically underestimate triggers (i.e., overall negative directional bias) does not emerge.

Bias and accuracy in trigger judgments were also moderated by actor (perceiver) and partner attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. More anxiously attached perceivers overestimated the extent to which the 24 behaviors triggered their romantic

partner, a finding that is conceptually consistent with prior research demonstrating that more anxious individuals perceive more conflict in their relationships (Campbell et al., 2005). Those with a more anxiously attached partner, in comparison, marginally underestimated their partner's triggers, suggesting that perceivers with a more anxious partner may be unaware of the degree that relationship behaviors upset or hurt the partner. Prior studies exploring the communication strategies of more anxious individuals indeed suggests that these individuals most often do not communicate openly about relationship-related concerns (Anders & Tucker, 2000), which in the present research may include disclosing how much a given behavior triggers them.

Surprisingly, more anxiously attached perceivers were unable to accurately judge the pattern of their partner's triggers (unless their partner was less anxiously attached him/herself). This finding runs partially counter to previous research that has demonstrated that more anxious individuals exhibit greater accuracy in perceiving their partner's thoughts and feelings during potentially distressful situations (see Simpson et al., 1992, 2011). It is possible that differences in methodology underlie these differences; for example, the situations partners are placed into in prior studies primarily involve conflict, support, or potentially threatening situations (e.g., attractive alternative partners). The surrounding context in previous research, then, may activate the attachment system for more anxious individuals, allowing them to focus on greater accuracy regarding relationship-related elements, such as their partner's thoughts and feelings. In Study 2 of this dissertation, however, the relationship trigger questionnaire may not have activated the attachment system in the same way. Another explanation for the discrepancies in findings is that the relationship judgments made by more anxious

individuals may be mostly a product of directional bias compared to tracking accuracy. To my knowledge, prior attachment studies have not tested bias and accuracy perceptual processes simultaneously.

Attachment avoidance findings were also partially inconsistent with existing literature. Neither more avoidantly attached perceivers nor their partners exhibited directional bias. I expected more avoidant persons to underestimate their partner's triggers given their general disconnect from their relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), and perceivers with a more avoidant partner to underestimate triggers, given that more avoidant partners do not self-disclose much (Bradford et al., 2002). Moreover, in Study 1 more avoidant individuals reported that relationship triggers occurred more frequently in their relationships. Regardless, it may be that both more and less avoidantly attached persons underestimated less severe triggers and overestimated more severe triggers, cancelling out the potential for a systematic display of directional bias.

An additional unexpected finding from Study 2's exploration of attachment moderation was that both more avoidantly persons and those with a more avoidantly attached partner exhibited high tracking accuracy of each other's triggers, though effects were strongest when the perceiver making the judgments or the partner being judged scored lower on attachment avoidance. Research by Simpson and colleagues (2011) demonstrated that more avoidant persons were *less* accurate when inferring their partner's thoughts and feelings. This may again be explained by differences in study contexts. More avoidant individuals deactivate their attachment system when feeling threatened (e.g., during conflict or support discussions), which may explain why they become less accurate in the contexts typically used in previous research. If the

relationship trigger questionnaire in Study 2 of this dissertation did not activate the attachment system, it is likely that more avoidant persons did not deactivate their attachment-related thoughts. It may instead be the case that more avoidant individuals have the capacity to accurately perceive their partner, but often actively "turn off" this ability (see Edelstein & Gillath, 2008). A final possibility is that less avoidant persons communicate directly about their thoughts and feelings, making them easy to judge accurately even when the perceiver is more avoidant.

The common theme of the attachment findings in Study 2 is that that less anxiously or avoidantly attached persons are particularly adroit trackers when it comes to judging their partner's pattern of relationship triggers. Furthermore, it appears to be easier to accurately track a partner who is less anxious or less avoidant. These findings perhaps suggest that biased and accurate trigger knowledge is driven primarily by the benefits typically linked to attachment security (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2013, for a recent review), as opposed to a result of the hypervigilance of greater attachment anxiety or the hypovigilance of greater attachment avoidance. That is, less anxious and less avoidant individuals engage in frequent and direct self-disclosure, and are also motivated to accurately understand their partners in order to maintain a healthy relationship; this combination may serve to make them more easily tracked by their partners, as well as allow the less anxious or avoidant person him/herself to correctly judge their partner's thoughts and feelings.

4.1 Implications

These studies emphasize the importance of biased and accurate knowledge within romantic relationships, and highlight the particular significance of bias and accuracy in

judgments of a partner's relationship triggers. Accurate trigger knowledge appears to be related to a partner's global relationship evaluations (e.g., relationship satisfaction) and more specific relationship behaviors (e.g., conflict management) particularly when a perceiver underestimates the extent to which triggering behaviors upset their partner. If the reported relationship outcomes reflect how actual behavior would occur in real-life situations, then the effects of biased and accurate trigger knowledge may have meaningful implications for the long-term success of the relationship. For instance, when perceivers underestimate their partner's more severe triggers, the partner is significantly less satisfied with the relationship. If, over time, the perceiver's judgment mismatches continue, it is perhaps unlikely that the couple would remain together (cf. Swann et al., 1994).

Additionally, these findings have implications for trigger-related behaviors; a potential dark side of accuracy might be that perceivers who know the behaviors that really anger or upset their partner, they could use that knowledge for nefarious purposes (e.g., intentionally trying to trigger their partner). In other words, knowing exactly what "buttons to push" might lead to occasional manipulative behavior or a negative indirect way to communicate displeasure with a partner. This may be particularly relevant for individuals who are more insecurely attached. Study 2 suggests that more anxious persons can accurately track a less anxious partner, and more avoidant persons can accurately track a partner regardless of their level of attachment avoidance. It may be, then, that individuals who score higher on attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance would be particularly likely to attempt intentional triggering as a way of "sending a

message" to their partners, especially because they often are uncomfortable communicating openly with their partners about their concerns.

The present study also raises interesting questions about the relation between individual differences in adult attachment and biased and accurate perceptions within relationships. Specifically, my dissertation research, as well as previous research (e.g., Simpson et al., 2011), has explored how attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance may predict relationship judgments. Less frequently explored, however, is how biased and accurate relationship perceptions may in turn reinforce levels of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. For example, if William perceives that Elisabeth is easily triggered and possesses many severe triggers, these perceptions may increase his attachment anxiety over time. Theoretically, it is possible both for attachment to influence perceptions and for perceptions to influence attachment (e.g., Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), although the present research is unable to test reverse causality. There are attachment implications, nevertheless, of biased and accurate judgments within relationships amenable to future empirical investigations.

4.2 Limitations

The major methodological limitation of these studies is that they relied solely on self-report measures of relationship perceptions and outcomes. For example, participants may be erroneously optimistic when reporting their conflict management behavior, and the design of this study did not allow for an investigation of how partners react when actually triggered by each other. A second potential limitation is that some or many of the triggers participants responded to may not have been relevant for a particular

relationship; however, given the range of responses on each trigger this is likely not a statistically meaningful limitation.

This research may also be limited by sample-related characteristics. For example, Study 1 relied on a convenience sample of MTurk participants. These particular individuals may use MTurk as a part- or full-time job; indeed, in February 2010 nearly 40% of workers across the United States and India reported that their income was less than $10,000 per year (Ross, Irani, Silberman, Zaldivar, & Tomlinson, 2010). Although I attempted to ensure that participants could complete the study only if they were residents of the United States, where a comparative 15% reported income less than $10,000 per year, there is still the possibility that this type of demographic may have skewed the data. Specifically, because lower income is associated with lower life satisfaction (Diener & Oishi, 2000), it may be that workers on MTurk (a relatively unhappy population) may respond differently to triggers than the mostly undergraduate students and community individuals recruited in Study 2 (a relatively happy population). Additionally, in both samples I did not assess other sociodemographic variables that may meaningfully influence how partners perceive each other and their relationship (e.g., socioeconomic status, level of education, number of children (if any) in the home, perceptions of overall community or family life).

Perhaps most importantly, a theoretical and conceptual limitation to the present studies is that the Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire I developed does not contain any trigger items that are just specific to romantic relationships. In other words, the trigger items may have tapped into the friendship aspect of a romantic relationship and might be easily adapted to be friend-specific or family member-specific.

Given that the If-Then Trigger Profile Questionnaire initially created by Friesen & Kammrath (2011) was meant to assess general trigger knowledge among friend pairs, it likely remained a mostly friendship-based measure even when rephrased to be self- or partner-enacted. Thus, there were, in fact, no trigger items that reflected behaviors that *only a romantic partner* (and, presumably, no alternative close other) *could enact* in the questionnaires developed for Studies 1 and 2. This potentially undermines my ability to make firm conclusions about the utility of accurate trigger knowledge, as it is possible that directional bias and tracking accuracy patterns might differ when taking into account a partner's triggers associated with passion and intimacy rather than companionship. Ideally, future research wishing to examine trigger knowledge in a romantic relationship context in particular should include items that would solely apply to that context (e.g., failure to meet sexual needs, lack of passion, tendency to flirt with attractive others, extreme jealousy of attractive others and/or opposite-sex friends, and so on).

4.3 Future Directions

These studies demonstrate preliminary evidence for the significance of relationship trigger knowledge in romantic couples. What remains unexplored, however, are the effects of biased and accurate trigger knowledge in partners' everyday lives. An over-time analysis of these perceptual processes and their influences on relationship behaviors and outcomes is a potentially fruitful area amenable to future research. Additionally, although unexplored in the current research, it seems very possible that a factor underlying greater tracking accuracy in particular is communication and self-disclosure. Future studies could examine the roles self-disclosure and direct communication play in biased and accurate perceptions, whether that be with a daily

experience study design, a communication intervention, or other method. These studies may wish to adopt an attachment perspective as well; doing so would shed light on the communication processes associated with individual differences in attachment and potentially clarify the circumstances in which more anxiously or avoidantly attached persons demonstrate high accuracy and inaccuracy, respectively.

The present research investigated biased and accurate trigger knowledge in the context of ongoing romantic relationships. The role of triggers in the early stages of relationships (e.g., relationship formation), however, may be an equally interesting topic to explore. Early in relationships, for instance, trigger perceptions may act as screening criteria, such that individuals who judge a potential partner to be easily and frequently triggered, or individuals who feel that a potential partner does not "get" their personal triggers, may not become involved in relationships with that person. Additionally, bias and accuracy in perceptions within relationships may vary across major relationship transitions; for example, the question of if and how trigger (or other) knowledge about a partner may change across the transition to parenthood is a potentially intriguing step for research to take. Perhaps partners may have less time to focus on accurately perceiving each other when much of their energy is newly directed toward caring for children. Similarly, perhaps partners who "get" each other have a smoother transition to parenthood compared to partners who do not.

Additionally, future research should investigate certain things that romantic partners might be motivated to perceive *inaccurately* instead of accurately. Fletcher and Kerr (2010), for instance, suggest that people are inaccurate when making judgments of their partner if this inaccuracy would protect them, their partner, or the relationship (e.g.,

from rejection). Potential constructs that partners might judge inaccurately in the interest of preserving their relationship could include perceptions of relational boredom (i.e., the degree to which the partner is "sick and tired" of the relationship, see Harasymchuk & Fehr, 2012) or sexual disinterest. With the ability to examine directional bias and tracking accuracy simultaneously in the T&B Model, researchers may find that motivated inaccuracy is associated more with directional bias (e.g., underestimating relational boredom or sexual disinterest) as opposed to tracking accuracy. That is, it would be potentially important for a perceiver to know if their partner was bored with their relationship (tracking accuracy), but it would perhaps help protect the perceiver's self-esteem and the relationship if the perceiver underestimated the extent to which their partner was bored (negative directional bias).

Lastly, although much previous research on accurate interpersonal perception focuses primarily on directional bias and tracking accuracy *adjusting for assumed similarity* (e.g., Dutra et al., 2014; West et al., 2014), the effects of assumed similarity, when they emerge, may be equally interesting to discuss (cf. Cronbach, 1955; Kenny & Acitelli, 2001). Given that romantic partners do not always assume similarity in their judgments of each other (see Kenny & Acitelli, 2001), a more thorough exploration of when and how assumed similarity occurs in a romantic relationship context—especially when simultaneously taking into account directional bias and tracking accuracy—might be quite informative and interesting. The potential association of assumed similarity with directional bias and/or tracking accuracy may also contribute novel insight into existing theory (e.g., perhaps partners demonstrate tracking accuracy in part because they project

their own feelings onto their judgments of their partner, and their partner possesses feelings that are actually similar, see West & Kenny, 2011).

4.4 Summary and Concluding Remarks

In sum, two studies contributed novel theoretical insight by providing support for the idea that romantic partners can be both biased and accurate when making judgments of the behaviors that trigger one another. This biased and accurate knowledge varies based on partners' attachment orientations, and has potential downstream effects on relationship outcomes such as partner satisfaction and conflict management. Indeed, it appears to be important that partners "get" each other, especially when it comes to conflict-related behaviors like triggers. In light of these findings, future research could fruitfully endeavor to examine these processes in daily experiences and to explore potential constructs that partners may be motivated to judge *inaccurately*.

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Appendix A
Study 1: Ethics Approval Form

Western Research

Research Ethics

Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Prof. Lorne Campbell
Department & Institution: Social Science\Psychology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 105677
Study Title: Which Romantic Relationship Behaviors are Important?
Sponsor:

NMREB Initial Approval Date: September 16, 2014
NMREB Expiry Date: September 30, 2015

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Instruments	All Study Materials and Measures	2014/08/15
Other	Debriefing Sheet	2014/08/15
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Poster	2014/08/15
Letter of Information & Consent	Letter of Information and Consent	2014/08/15
Revised Western University Protocol	Revised Western Protocol (clean copy) version date 9/2/2014	2014/09/02

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the HSREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of HSREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

___ Erika Basile	✓ Grace Kelly	___Mina Mekhail	___Vikki Tran

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Appendix B

Study 1: 36-Item Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire
(adapted from Friesen & Kammrath, 2011)

Instructions.
We all get bothered by our romantic partners from time to time. However, the specific behaviors that bother us vary from person to person. We call the interpersonal behaviors in your relationship that really bother you your "relationship triggers." Triggers immediately set off strong negative emotions inside of you, such as anger, irritation, or anxiety, as a reaction to your partner's behavior, but may or may not result in you doing anything about these emotions.

In the following questionnaire we will be looking at a number of types of relationship behaviors that are triggers for some people, but not for others. We would like to know how important you think each of these triggers is for relationship outcomes, and how often they occur in your current relationship. For each of the following behavior descriptions, please rate the following questions using the scales below:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important		*Moderately important*		*Very important*

1. How important do you think this trigger would be in predicting your romantic relationship outcomes (e.g., how happy you are, whether you and your partner stay together in the long run, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		*Sometimes*		*All the time*

2. How frequently does this occur in your current romantic relationship?

Emotional Dependence
When my partner needs me to pay attention to him/her. When he/she checks in with me and needs me to check in with him/her regularly. When he/she needs me to accompany him/her places.

Disregard
When my partner leaves me out of things. When he/she ignores me. When he/she doesn't include me in his/her plans.

Control
When my partner tells me what to do. When he/she tries to control me. When he/she tries to exert authority over me.

Emotional Autonomy
When my partner doesn't need me. When he/she doesn't check in with me. When he/she doesn't pay attention to me. When he/she doesn't touch base regularly. When he/she does something or goes somewhere without me.

Clinginess
When my partner doesn't give me my space. When he/she won't leave me alone. When he/she has to be right where I am. When he/she invites him/herself to hang out with me.

Stubbornness
When my partner is not willing to compromise or cooperate with me. When he/she insists on getting his/her way. When he/she stubbornly refuses to bend or be flexible.

Conflict Seeking
When my partner starts an unnecessary conflict. When he/she disagrees with me just to start an argument. When he/she purposefully provokes me.

Undue-Attention Seeking

When my partner does something just to get my attention. When he/she is unnecessarily loud and obnoxious. When he/she behaves in a way that is needlessly attention-seeking.

Dishonesty

When my partner lies and exaggerates the truth. When he/she doesn't tell the entire truth or only tells half-truths. When he/she is dishonest.

Insincerity

When my partner acts fake. When he/she flatters me to get something. When he/she tells me what I want to hear. When he/she acts differently toward me when we're with other people, and isn't true to his/her own personality.

Mistreatment

When my partner mistreats me. When he/she does not treat me with respect. When he/she is rude or unkind to me.

Judging

When my partner judges and criticizes me. When he/she easily finds faults in me. When he/she points out the negatives in me.

Mistrust/Suspicion

When my partner doesn't trust me with information. When he/she is suspicious of my intentions. When he/she is very secretive and mistrusting.

Conflict Avoidance

When my partner avoids conflict by ignoring a problem. When he/she refuses to confront me with an issue. When he/she avoids necessary conflict and confrontation.

Selfishness

When my partner acts selfishly. When he/she does what is best for him/herself at the cost of my needs. When he/she thinks about his/her own needs before my needs.

Divulgence

When my partner talks publicly about private subject matter. When he/she reveals personal information about him/herself or about me. When he/she does not treat intimate information with discretion.

Interruption

When my partner interrupts me. When he/she talks over me. When he/she doesn't wait his/her turn to speak.

Complaining

When my partner complains. When he/she whines about a situation. When he/she grumbles and expresses dissatisfaction.

Anger/Aggression

When my partner expresses anger. When he/she raises his/her voice and yells. When he/she loses his/her temper and acts aggressively.

Moodiness

When my partner is moody. When he/she is grumpy for no reason. When he/she is crabby, sulky, or testy.

Impatience

When my partner is visibly upset when he/she is made to wait. When he/she acts annoyed and impatient when I inconvenience him/her. When he/she makes a big deal over any delay or interference.

Anxiety/Worry
When my partner gets very anxious over a minor situation. When he/she allows something small to worry him/her. When he/she frets and worries over something unimportant.

Emotional Under-Expression
When my partner hides what he/she is really feeling, so you can't tell from the outside what he/she feels, if anything. When he/she does not express his/her emotions in situations where emotional expression is appropriate or expected. When he/she remains unemotional when emotional expression is called for.

Stress/Tension
When my partner gets very tense and worked up. When he/she seems stressed out. When he/she gets edgy and flustered.

Hard-Heartedness
When my partner is unsympathetic to a situation that I am in. When he/she is indifferent to my feelings. When he/she acts hard and uncaring toward me.

Lack of Motivation
When my partner doesn't put much effort into our relationship. When he/she slacks off and doesn't do his/her fair share of the work. When he/she doesn't work hard on us.

Instrumental Dependence
When my partner asks for help with something he/she should know how to do. When he/she seeks assistance from me with something he/she should be able to do by him/herself. When he/she does not figure something out for him/herself.

Inconsideration of Time
When my partner shows up late. When he/she cancels plans at the last minute. When he/she isn't ready on time and makes me wait.

Deflection of Responsibility
When my partner does not admit when he/she has made a mistake. When he/she blames others or me rather than taking responsibility. When he/she makes excuses for his/her shortcomings.

Failure to Return Contacts
When my partner doesn't email or text me back. When he/she doesn't return my phone calls. When he/she doesn't respond to messages I have left him/her.

Monitoring
When my partner doesn't trust me to do things right. When he/she constantly checks up on me. When he/she watches to make sure I am doing it correctly.

Conventionality
When my partner is not willing to listen to a new idea or try something new. When he/she insists something be done the way it has always been done. When he/she is not open to change.

Risk-Taking
When my partner makes a risky decision on impulse. When he/she jumps into something without thinking it through. When he/she doesn't consider the consequences of his/her actions.

Lack of Seriousness
When my partner doesn't take me seriously enough. When he/she doesn't seem to recognize the gravity of a situation. When he/she takes something too lightly.

Negativity

When my partner only points out the negatives in something. When he/she doesn't look on the bright side of a situation. When he/she is too negativistic.

Ignorance

When my partner doesn't know something that I think he/she should know. When he/she lacks knowledge of things I care about. When he/she is unaware of something I think is important.

Is there a relationship trigger you consider very important that wasn't listed in the previous descriptions? If so, please tell us briefly about it here:

Appendix C

Studies 1 and 2: 36-Item Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (Brennan et al., 1998)

Instructions.

Following are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each statement using the scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						*Strongly agree*

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 relationships.
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 bit about losing my partner.
9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
10. I often wish 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 my partner to show more feeling, more commitment.
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 when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
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.

*Indicates a reverse-scored item

Attachment Anxiety: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22R, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36
Attachment Avoidance: 1, 3R, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15R, 17, 19R, 21, 23, 25R, 27R, 29R, 31R, 33R, 35R

Appendix D

Study 1: Gender Differences in Relationship Trigger Importance and Frequency across the 24 Most Important Individual Trigger Items

Trigger	Trigger Importance				Trigger Frequency			
	Range	*M*	*SD*	Gender Diff. *t*	Range	*M*	*SD*	Gender Diff. *t*
Dishonesty				2.41*				0.21
Men	1-5	4.45	0.95		1-5	1.99	1.14	
Women	1-5	4.67	0.73		1-5	2.02	1.04	
Mistreatment				5.82***				0.93
Men	1-5	4.25	1.03		1-5	1.78	0.94	
Women	1-5	4.76	0.61		1-5	1.89	1.09	
Mistrust/Suspicion				3.74***				-3.24***
Men	1-5	4.14	1.08		1-5	2.17	1.16	
Women	1-5	4.52	0.81		1-5	1.77	1.05	
Conflict Seeking				3.00**				-0.59
Men	1-5	4.02	1.08		1-5	2.21	1.14	
Women	1-5	4.35	0.90		1-5	2.13	1.12	
Anger/Aggression				3.67***				0.58
Men	1-5	3.90	1.00		1-5	2.16	1.07	
Women	1-5	4.29	0.92		1-5	2.23	1.12	
Hard-Heartedness				4.77***				0.26
Men	1-5	3.81	1.06		1-5	2.12	1.22	
Women	1-5	4.31	0.85		1-5	2.16	1.13	
Control				3.18**				-1.75+
Men	1-5	3.87	1.12		1-5	2.26	0.92	
Women	1-5	4.25	1.02		1-5	2.05	1.15	
Disregard				3.17**				0.61
Men	1-5	3.89	1.01		1-5	2.17	1.04	
Women	1-5	4.25	1.02		1-5	2.24	0.99	
Judging				6.28***				-1.49
Men	1-5	3.64	1.07		1-5	2.32	0.94	
Women	1-5	4.32	0.89		1-5	2.14	1.14	
Selfishness				4.81***				-0.21
Men	1-5	3.66	1.05		1-5	2.44	1.11	
Women	1-5	4.19	0.93		1-5	2.41	1.20	
Lack of Motivation				4.61***				1.29
Men	1-5	3.62	1.14		1-5	2.21	1.05	
Women	1-5	4.17	1.02		1-5	2.39	1.27	
Divulgence				5.19***				-4.02***
Men	1-5	3.48	1.17		1-5	2.11	1.10	
Women	1-5	4.10	1.03		1-5	1.67	0.93	

				2.72**				-1.69+
Insincerity								
Men	1-5	3.66	1.06		1-5	2.03	1.07	
Women	1-5	3.97	1.01		1-5	1.84	1.00	
Stubbornness				3.42***				0.61
Men	1-5	3.62	0.98		1-5	2.74	0.99	
Women	1-5	4.00	0.97		1-5	2.81	1.12	
Emotional Autonomy				3.09**				0.07
Men	1-5	3.60	1.03		1-5	2.36	1.08	
Women	1-5	3.97	1.07		1-5	2.37	1.06	
Deflection of Responsibility				2.92**				0.37
Men	1-5	3.55	1.02		1-5	2.38	1.12	
Women	1-5	3.89	1.04		1-5	2.43	1.22	
Conflict Avoidance				3.55***				1.58
Men	1-5	3.45	1.05		1-5	2.51	1.02	
Women	1-5	3.86	1.02		1-5	2.70	1.08	
Monitoring				4.02***				-2.19*
Men	1-5	3.38	1.10		1-5	2.04	1.06	
Women	1-5	3.87	1.08		1-5	1.78	1.05	
Negativity				1.84+				-1.35
Men	1-5	3.55	1.09		1-5	2.55	1.19	
Women	1-5	3.78	1.12		1-5	2.37	1.17	
Clinginess				2.09*				-1.92+
Men	1-5	3.45	1.12		1-5	2.47	1.08	
Women	1-5	3.73	1.19		1-5	2.23	1.14	
Emotional Under-Expression				3.28***				1.33
Men	1-5	3.34	1.03		1-5	2.45	1.11	
Women	1-5	3.73	1.07		1-5	2.62	1.11	
Emotional Dependence				0.28				0.06
Men	1-5	3.52	1.09		1-5	3.34	0.95	
Women	1-5	3.56	1.17		1-5	3.34	1.14	
Risk-Taking				2.93**				-0.67
Men	1-5	3.26	1.07		1-5	2.20	1.05	
Women	1-5	3.62	1.10		1-5	2.12	1.06	
Lack of Seriousness				2.88**				0.57
Men	1-5	3.25	1.09		1-5	2.14	1.05	
Women	1-5	3.60	1.09		1-5	2.21	1.12	

Note. The above triggers are ordered from most important to least important from their rankings in the overall analysis (see Table 1). Participants rated trigger importance/frequency on 5-point scales (1 = *not at all important/never*, 3 = *moderately important/sometimes*, 5 = *very important/all the time*).
$+p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Appendix E
Study 2: Ethics Approval Form

Western Research

Research Ethics

Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Prof. Lorne Campbell
Department & Institution: Social Science\Psychology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 105694
Study Title: A Study of Romantic Couples
Sponsor:

NMREB Initial Approval Date: September 26, 2014
NMREB Expiry Date: September 30, 2015

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Other	Debriefing Sheet	2014/08/17
Instruments	All Study Measures	2014/08/17
Revised Western University Protocol	revised western protocol - clean copy	2014/09/22
Recruitment Items	revised recruitment flyer - clean copy	2014/09/22
Revised Letter of Information & Consent	revised LOI - clean copy	2014/09/22

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the HSREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of HSREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

___Erika Basile	___Grace Kelly	___Mina Mekhail	___Vikki Tran

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Appendix F

Study 2: 24-Item Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire – Perceptions of the Self
(adapted from Friesen & Kammrath, 2011)

Instructions.
We all get bothered by our romantic partners from time to time. However, the specific behaviors that bother us vary from person to person. We call the interpersonal behaviors in your relationship that really bother you your "relationship triggers." Triggers immediately set off strong negative emotions inside of you, such as anger, irritation, or anxiety, as a reaction to your partner's behavior, but may or may not result in you doing anything about these emotions.

In the following questionnaire we will be looking at a number of types of relationship behaviors that are triggers for some people, but not for others. We would like to know how much each of these types of behavior triggers you, and how often your partner enacts each behavior in your current relationship. For each of the following behavior descriptions, please rate the following questions using the scales below:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		*Moderately*		*Very much*

1. How much does this behavior trigger you?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		*Sometimes*		*All the time*

2. How often does your romantic partner engage in this type of behavior in order to trigger you?

Emotional Dependence
When my partner needs me to pay attention to him/her. When he/she checks in with me and needs me to check in with him/her regularly. When he/she needs me to accompany him/her places.

Disregard
When my partner leaves me out of things. When he/she ignores me. When he/she doesn't include me in his/her plans.

Control
When my partner tells me what to do. When he/she tries to control me. When he/she tries to exert authority over me.

Emotional Autonomy
When my partner doesn't need me. When he/she doesn't check in with me. When he/she doesn't pay attention to me. When he/she doesn't touch base regularly. When he/she does something or goes somewhere without me.

Clinginess
When my partner doesn't give me my space. When he/she won't leave me alone. When he/she has to be right where I am. When he/she invites him/herself to hang out with me.

Stubbornness
When my partner is not willing to compromise or cooperate with me. When he/she insists on getting his/her way. When he/she stubbornly refuses to bend or be flexible.

Conflict Seeking
When my partner starts an unnecessary conflict. When he/she disagrees with me just to start an argument. When he/she purposefully provokes me.

Dishonesty

When my partner lies and exaggerates the truth. When he/she doesn't tell the entire truth or only tells half-truths. When he/she is dishonest.

Insincerity

When my partner acts fake. When he/she flatters me to get something. When he/she tells me what I want to hear. When he/she acts differently toward me when we're with other people, and isn't true to his/her own personality.

Mistreatment

When my partner mistreats me. When he/she does not treat me with respect. When he/she is rude or unkind to me.

Judging

When my partner judges and criticizes me. When he/she easily finds faults in me. When he/she points out the negatives in me.

Mistrust/Suspicion

When my partner doesn't trust me with information. When he/she is suspicious of my intentions. When he/she is very secretive and mistrusting.

Conflict Avoidance

When my partner avoids conflict by ignoring a problem. When he/she refuses to confront me with an issue. When he/she avoids necessary conflict and confrontation.

Selfishness

When my partner acts selfishly. When he/she does what is best for him/herself at the cost of my needs. When he/she thinks about his/her own needs before my needs.

Divulgence

When my partner talks publicly about private subject matter. When he/she reveals personal information about him/herself or about me. When he/she does not treat intimate information with discretion.

Anger/Aggression

When my partner expresses anger. When he/she raises his/her voice and yells. When he/she loses his/her temper and acts aggressively.

Emotional Under-Expression

When my partner hides what he/she is really feeling, so you can't tell from the outside what he/she feels, if anything. When he/she does not express his/her emotions in situations where emotional expression is appropriate or expected. When he/she remains unemotional when emotional expression is called for.

Hard-Heartedness

When my partner is unsympathetic to a situation that I am in. When he/she is indifferent to my feelings. When he/she acts hard and uncaring toward me.

Lack of Motivation

When my partner doesn't put much effort into our relationship. When he/she slacks off and doesn't do his/her fair share of the work. When he/she doesn't work hard on us.

Deflection of Responsibility

When my partner does not admit when he/she has made a mistake. When he/she blames others or me rather than taking responsibility. When he/she makes excuses for his/her shortcomings.

Monitoring

When my partner doesn't trust me to do things right. When he/she constantly checks up on me. When he/she watches to make sure I am doing it correctly.

Risk-Taking

When my partner makes a risky decision on impulse. When he/she jumps into something without thinking it through. When he/she doesn't consider the consequences of his/her actions.

Lack of Seriousness

When my partner doesn't take me seriously enough. When he/she doesn't seem to recognize the gravity of a situation. When he/she takes something too lightly.

Negativity

When my partner only points out the negatives in something. When he/she doesn't look on the bright side of a situation. When he/she is too negativistic.

Appendix G

Study 2: 24-Item Partner-Specific Relationship Trigger Questionnaire – Perceptions of the Partner
(adapted from Friesen & Kammrath, 2011)

Instructions.
Just as we can get bothered by our romantic partners from time to time, our romantic partners can get bothered by us from time to time. Now we are interested in your perceptions of your partner's relationship triggers. Triggers immediately set off strong negative emotions inside of your partner, such as anger, irritation, or anxiety, as a reaction to your behavior, but may or may not result in your partner doing anything about these emotions.

We would like to know how much each of these types of behavior triggers your current romantic partner, and how often you enact each behavior in your current relationship. For each of the following behavior descriptions, please rate the following questions using the scales below:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		*Moderately*		*Very much*

1. How much does this behavior trigger your romantic partner?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		*Sometimes*		*All the time*

2. How often do you engage in this type of behavior in order to trigger your romantic partner?

Emotional Dependence
When I need my partner to pay attention to me. When I check in with him/her and need him/her to check in with me regularly. When I need him/her to accompany me places.

Disregard
When I leave my partner out of things. When I ignore him/her. When I don't include him/her in my plans.

Control
When I tell my partner what to do. When I try to control him/her. When I try to exert authority over him/her.

Emotional Autonomy
When I don't need my partner. When I don't check in with him/her. When I don't pay attention to him/her. When I don't touch base regularly. When I do something or go somewhere without him/her.

Clinginess
When I don't give my partner his/her space. When I won't leave him/her alone. When I have to be right where he/she is. When I invite myself to hang out with him/her.

Stubbornness
When I am not willing to compromise or cooperate with my partner. When I insist on getting my way. When I stubbornly refuse to bend or be flexible.

Conflict Seeking
When I start an unnecessary conflict. When I disagree with my partner just to start an argument. When I purposefully provoke him/her.

Dishonesty
When I lie and exaggerate the truth. When I don't tell the entire truth or only tell half-truths. When I am dishonest.

Insincerity
When I act fake. When I flatter my partner to get something. When I tell my partner what he/she wants to hear. When I act differently toward him/her when we're with other people, and am not true to my own personality.

Mistreatment
When I mistreat my partner. When I do not treat him/her with respect. When I am rude or unkind to him/her.

Judging
When I judge and criticize my partner. When I easily find faults in him/her. When I point out the negatives in him/her.

Mistrust/Suspicion
When I don't trust my partner with information. When I am suspicious of his/her intentions. When I am very secretive and mistrusting.

Conflict Avoidance
When I avoid conflict by ignoring a problem. When I refuse to confront my partner with an issue. When I avoid necessary conflict and confrontation.

Selfishness
When I act selfishly. When I do what is best for myself at the cost of my partner's needs. When I think about my own needs before his/her needs.

Divulgence
When I talk publicly about private subject matter. When I reveal personal information about myself or about my partner. When I do not treat intimate information with discretion.

Anger/Aggression
When I express anger. When I raise my voice and yell. When I lose my temper and act aggressively.

Emotional Under-Expression
When I hide what I am really feeling, so you can't tell from the outside what I feel, if anything. When I do not express my emotions in situations where emotional expression is appropriate or expected. When I remain unemotional when emotional expression is called for.

Hard-Heartedness
When I am unsympathetic to a situation that my partner is in. When I am indifferent to his/her feelings. When I act hard and uncaring toward him/her.

Lack of Motivation
When I don't put much effort into our relationship. When I slack off and don't do my fair share of the work. When I don't work hard on us.

Deflection of Responsibility
When I do not admit when I have made a mistake. When I blame others or my partner rather than taking responsibility. When I make excuses for my shortcomings.

Monitoring
When I don't trust my partner to do things right. When I constantly check up on him/her. When I watch to make sure he/she is doing it correctly.

Risk-Taking
When I make a risky decision on impulse. When I jump into something without thinking it through. When I don't consider the consequences of my actions.

Lack of Seriousness
When I don't take my partner seriously enough. When I don't seem to recognize the gravity of a situation. When I take something too lightly.

Negativity
When I only point out the negatives in something. When I don't look on the bright side of a situation. When I am too negativistic.

Appendix H
Study 2: 37-Item Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (Eggeman et al., 1985)

Instructions.
Please use the scale below and respond to the following statements in terms of how well each characterizes your relationship with your partner.

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never	*Once in a while*	*Sometimes*	*Frequently*	*Almost always*

Agenda-Building Subscale:
When you and your partner are beginning to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, how often:

1. Do you both begin to understand each other's feelings reasonably quickly?
2. Do you both get your points across to each other without too much trouble?
3. Do you both begin to appreciate each other's points of view on the matter fairly soon?
4. Does your partner seem to be supportive of your feelings about your disagreement?
5. Does your partner tell you that you shouldn't feel the way you do about the issue?*
6. Is your partner willing to really hear what you want to communicate?
7. Does your partner insist on contradicting many of your ideas on the issue before he/she even understands what your ideas are?*
8. Does your partner make you feel that your views, even if different from his/hers, are really important to him/her?
9. Does your partner seem more interested in justifying his/her own point of view rather than in understanding yours?*
10. Does your partner let you feel upset or angry without putting you down for it?
11. Does your partner blame you for any of your feelings of frustration or irritation as if they were mostly your own fault, none of his/hers?*

*Indicates a reverse-scored item

Agenda-Building: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5R, 6, 7R, 8, 9R, 10, 11R

Arguing Subscale:
After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often:

1. Are you able to clearly identify the specific things about which you disagree?
2. Are you able to identify clearly the specific things about which you do agree?
3. Are you both able to express how the other feels about the issue?
4. Are you both able to express the other's viewpoint nearly as well as you could your own viewpoint?
5. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of discouragement?*
6. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of anger?*
7. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of disgust?*
8. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of condescension?*
9. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of resentment?*
10. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of hostility?*
11. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of frustration?*
12. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of bitterness?*
13. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of self-pity (for himself/herself)?*
14. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of cynicism?*
15. Does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of respect towards you?

*Indicates a reverse-scored item

Arguing: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5R, 6R, 7R, 8R, 9R, 10R, 11R, 12R, 13R, 14R, 15

<u>Negotiating Subscale:</u>
After you and your partner feel you are close to a solution to your disagreement over an important issue, how often:

1. Are you able to completely resolve it with some sort of compromise that is OK with both of you?
2. Do you end up with very little resolved after all?*
3. Do you quickly bring the matter to a conclusion that is satisfactory for both of you?
4. Do you realize the matter will have to be reargued in the near future because at least one of you is still basically unhappy with the apparent solution?*
5. Do you find that just as soon as you think you have gotten things resolved, your partner comes up with a new idea for resolving the issue?*
6. Does your partner keep on trying to propose things that are not mutually acceptable ways of resolving the issue at hand?*
7. Does it seem that no matter what you suggest, your partner keeps on finding new, supposedly better solutions?*
8. Are you both willing to give and take in order to settle the disagreement?
9. Are you and your partner able to give up some of what you wanted in order to bring the issue to a close?
10. Are you and your partner able to keep coming closer and closer together on a mutually acceptable solution until you achieve it?
11. Are you and your partner able to reach a mutually acceptable contract for resolving the disagreement?

*Indicates a reverse-scored item

Negotiating: 1, 2R, 3, 4R, 5R, 6R, 7R, 8, 9, 10, 11

Appendix I

Study 2: 7-Item Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988)

Instructions.
The following are questions about your current romantic relationship. Please answer each question as openly and honestly as possible.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all/extremely poor				*A great deal/extremely good*

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?
4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?*
5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?
6. How much do you love your partner?
7. How many problems are there in your relationship?*

*Indicates a reverse-scored item

Relationship Satisfaction: 1, 2, 3, 4R, 5, 6, 7R

Appendix J

Study 2: 4-Item Intimacy/Responsiveness Scale (Reis, 2003)

Instructions.
Please use the scale below and respond to the following statements in terms of how well each characterizes your relationship with your partner.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				*Very much*

1. My partner sees the "real" me.
2. My partner "gets the facts right" about me.
3. My partner is aware of what I am thinking and feeling.
4. My partner understands me.

Feeling Understood: 1, 2, 3, 4

Curriculum Vitae

SARAH C. E. STANTON

Education

2015   Ph.D., Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
2011   M.Sc., Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
2009   B.Sc., Psychology (Major), Theatre (Major), Northwestern University

Professional Experience

2013-   Lecturer, Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario
2013-   Staff Writer, ScienceOfRelationships.com
2009-   Graduate Student, Love Lab, University of Western Ontario
              PI: Lorne Campbell
2007-2009   Research Assistant, Relationships and Motivation Lab, Northwestern
         University
              PI: Eli Finkel

Scholarships and Grants

2014-2015   Ontario Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral; CAD-$15,000
2011-2015   University of Western Ontario Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral;
         CAD-$71,700
2009-2011   University of Western Ontario Graduate Research Scholarship – Master's;
         CAD-$30,000
2008   Northwestern University School of Communication Undergraduate
         Research Grant; USD-$3,000

Honors and Awards

2015   Relationship Researchers Interest Group (RRIG) Graduate Student Paper
         Award Winner
2014   University of Western Ontario Three-Minute Thesis Competition (3MT)
         Finalist
2013   Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Outstanding
         Research Award Winner
2013   Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Student Poster
         Award Runner-Up
2013   Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Student Travel
         Award
2012   University of Western Ontario Three-Minute Thesis Competition (3MT)
         Finalist

2011-2012   Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Vanier Canada Graduate
              Scholarship Nominee
2011   University of Western Ontario Leola E. Neal Award for Best Master's
              Thesis in Psychology
2010   University of Western Ontario Graduate Thesis Research Award –
              Master's
2009   Northwestern University William A. Hunt Award for Best Honors Thesis
              in Psychology
2005-2009   Northwestern University Dean's List

Publications

Ж denotes students of mine (undergraduate or graduate, current or former)
ɸ denotes later-listed authors who served as co-first or co-corresponding author

Journal Articles

Stanton, S. C. E., & Campbell, L. (2015). Can't get you off my mind: Relationship
        reflection creates cognitive load for more anxiously attached individuals. *Journal
        of Social and Personal Relationships*, *32*, 441-455. doi:
        10.1177/0265407514536292

Campbell, L., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** (2014). The predictive validity of ideal partner
        preferences in relationship formation: What we know, what we don't know, and
        why it matters. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *8*, 485-494. doi:
        10.1111/spc3.12126

Stanton, S. C. E., & Campbell, L. (2014). Perceived social support moderates the link
        between attachment anxiety and health outcomes. *PLoS ONE*, *9*, e95358. doi:
        10.1371/journal.pone.0095358

Stanton, S. C. E., & Campbell, L. (2014). Psychological and physiological predictors of
        health in romantic relationships: An attachment perspective. *Journal of
        Personality*, *82*, 528-538. doi: 10.1111/jopy.12056

Stanton, S. C. E., Campbell, L., & Loving, T. J. (2014). Energized by love: Thinking
        about romantic relationships increases positive affect and blood glucose levels.
        Psychophysiology, *51*, 990-995. doi: 10.1111/psyp.12249
        ▪ *Winner of the 2011 University of Western Ontario Leola E. Neal Award for
          Best Master's Thesis in Psychology*
        ▪ *Winner of the 2015 Relationship Researchers Interest Group (RRIG)
          Graduate Student Paper Award*
        ▪ *Media coverage by Men's Health, Shape Magazine, Fox News, Nature
          World News, Medical Xpress, CTV, CBC Radio, and others*

Stanton, S. C. E., & Finkel, E. J. (2012). Too tired to take offense: When depletion promotes forgiveness. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*, 587-590. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.11.011
- ▪ *Winner of the 2009 Northwestern University William A. Hunt Award for Best Honors Thesis in Psychology*
- ▪ *Media coverage by AARP The Magazine*

Book Chapters and Encyclopedia Entries

Campbell, L., Pink, J. C., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** (2015). Ideal mate standards and romantic relationships. In M. Mikulincer, P. R. Shaver, J. A. Simpson, & J. F. Dovidio (Eds.), *APA handbook of personality and social psychology: Interpersonal relations* (pp. 247-269). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi: 10.1037/14344-009

Campbell, L., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** (2015). Actor-partner interdependence model. In R. L. Cautin & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of clinical psychology* (pp. 1-7). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. doi: 10.1002/9781118625392.wbecp467

Campbell, L., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** (2013). Handling conflicts positively. In M. Hojjat & D. Cramer (Eds.), *Positive psychology of love* (pp. 134-145). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi: N/A

Manuscripts Under Review or Revising for Resubmission

Campbell, L., ᚲChin, K., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** (manuscript under review). *Initial evidence for the predictive validity of ideal partner preferences in newly formed relationships*.

Muise, A., **Stanton, S. C. E.,** Kim, J. J., & Impett, E. A. (revising for resubmission). *Not in the mood? Men under (not over) perceive their partner's sexual desire in established intimate relationships*.

Stanton, S. C. E., & Campbell, L. (accepted pending minor revisions). *Attachment avoidance and amends-making: A case advocating the need for attempting to replicate one's own work*.

Stanton, S. C. E., Campbell, L., & Pink, J. C. (manuscript under review). *Benefits of positive relationship experiences and intimacy promotion for avoidantly attached individuals*.
- ▪ *Winner of the 2013 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Outstanding Research Award*

Manuscripts in Preparation

Armstrong, J. B., **ᶲStanton, S. C. E.,** & Campbell, L. *Basking in reflected glory* and *shame: Evidence for a vicarious spotlight effect in close relationships*.

Campbell, L., **Stanton, S. C. E.,** Simpson, J. A., & Marshall, T. C. *Anxious attachment and relationship processes in the presence of relationship threat*.

Ж Chin, K., & **Stanton, S. C. E.** *Self-regulation*.

Hahn, C., Campbell, L., **Stanton, S. C. E.,** & Pink, J. C. *The role of adult attachment in information-seeking strategies employed by long-term romantic partners*.

Muise, A., **Stanton, S. C. E.,** & Impett, E. A. *Communally-motivated people are more accurate and less biased when detecting their partner's sexual desire*.

Stanton, S. C. E., Ж Bastow, P. V., & Campbell, L. *Perceiving cruel intentions: Do people with a Dark Triad partner know when they're being manipulated?*

Stanton, S. C. E., Pink, J. C., Campbell, L., Muise, A., & Impett, E. A. *I'm just not that into you: Avoidant attachment and sexual experience in romantic relationships*.
- *Runner-up for the 2013 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Student Poster Award*

Other Training

July 2011   Dyadic Data Analysis Workshop, Michigan State University
                    Instructors: Deborah Kashy, Rob Ackerman

Teaching Experience

Undergraduate Courses Taught
Summer 2015 Introduction to Social Psychology (Online), University of Western Ontario
Winter 2015   Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
Summer 2014 Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
Fall 2013   Psychological Aspects of Life Skills (Online), University of Western Ontario

Undergraduate Labs/Tutorials Taught
Winter 2014   Research in Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
Fall 2012   Research in Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
2011-2012   Research Methods in Psychology, University of Western Ontario
2010-2011   Research Methods in Psychology, University of Western Ontario

Teaching Assistant
Fall 2014   Social Psychology, University of Western Ontario
Fall 2013   Introduction to Cognition, King's University College
Summer 2013 Statistics for Psychology (Online), University of Western Ontario
Winter 2013   Interpersonal Relationships, University of Western Ontario
Summer 2012 Statistics for Psychology (Online), University of Western Ontario

Winter 2010   Psychology of Human Adjustment, University of Western Ontario
Winter 2010   Psychology of Perception, University of Western Ontario
Fall 2009   Introduction to Psychology, University of Western Ontario
Summer 2009 Close Relationships, Northwestern University

Teaching Certifications
2013   Certificate in University Teaching and Learning, University of Western Ontario
2010   Teaching Mentor Certificate, University of Western Ontario
2010   Advanced Teaching Certificate, University of Western Ontario

Teaching Courses Taken
Winter 2012   Theory and Practice of University Teaching, University of Western Ontario

Professional Service

Ad Hoc Reviewer
Evolutionary Psychology
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology
Journal of Personality
Journal of Social and Personal Relationships

University Service
2012-2015   Social Psychology Area Brownbag Coordinator, University of Western Ontario
2012-2013   Department of Psychology Space and Facilities Committee, University of Western Ontario
2011-2012   Social Psychology Area Lab Reservations Coordinator, University of Western Ontario
2009-2011   Social Psychology Area M.Sc. Student Representative, University of Western Ontario
2009-2010   Graduate Teaching Assistant Need and Bursary Evaluation Committee, University of Western Ontario
2009-2010   Department of Psychology Graduate Affairs Committee, University of Western Ontario