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**INTERPERSONAL CONTROL IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS:  
HOW IS IT AFFECTED BY TRUST IN ONE'S PARTNER AND ADULT  
ATTACHMENT STYLE?**

by

Melissa A. Franz

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Psychology  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
In Partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling  
at Rowan University  
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Thesis Chair: Matthew Miller, Psy.D.

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## **Abstract**

Melissa A. Franz

### **INTERPERSONAL CONTROL IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS: HOW IS IT AFFECTED BY TRUST IN ONE'S PARTNER AND ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLE?**

2011/12

Matthew Miller, Psy.D.

Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The U.S. spends billions of dollars each year treating victims of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. A majority of college women (up to 75 percent) reported having experienced psychological or emotional abuse. These acts are intended to demean, criticize, and dominate one's partner. Control is one facet of psychological abuse and is intended to regulate one's partner. Control and psychological abuse are related to numerous negative outcomes in its victims. This study examines the influence of attachment style and trust on one's use of IPC in a relationship. One hundred forty seven participants were recruited (1) via a social networking website and (2) via their enrollment in Essentials of Psychology as a Rowan undergraduate student. Participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (Murphy & Hoover, 1999), Control Scale (Stets, 1993), Dyadic Satisfaction Scale (Spanier, 1976), Trust Scale (Rempel & Holmes, 1986), and Trust in Interpersonal Relationships (Larzelere & Huston, 1980). Results showed that high relationship satisfaction was related to high trust and attachment, and low control and emotional abuse. Results also demonstrated that trust mediated the relationship between attachment and emotional abuse.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

Treatment for victims of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse costs the United States more than 5.8 billion dollars per year (Coker *et al.*, 2002). About twenty percent of women report being physically abused by their partners (Lipsky & Caetano, 2009), but more than seventy five percent college women report suffering psychological or emotional abuse (Neufeld, McNamara, & Ertl, 1999). Psychological abuse has been defined as any non-physical acts that hurt or threaten to hurt the victim (Arias & Pape, 1999). It includes acts of domination, criticism, coercion, social isolation, verbal aggression, humiliation, degradation, threats of harm, manipulation, and emotional withdrawal from one's partner. The perpetrator's intent in using psychological abuse is to produce fear and emotional harm to the victim (Henning & Klesges, 2003; Murphy & Hoover, 1999; O'Leary, 1999; Sackett & Saunders, 1999).

Within the context of intimate relationships, psychological abuse usually occurs with or precedes physical abuse (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Arias & Pape, 1999; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2008; Henning & Klesges, 2003; Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary, 1999; Stets 1992; Stets & Burke, 2005). One study even described a man's verbal efforts to control his partner as being more "successful" when used alongside physical abuse (Henning and Klesges, 2003).

It's not only psychological abuse offenders using physical violence. Researchers found that up to 94% of women using physical violence against their partners were previous victims of controlling or hostile behaviors (Simmons, Pehmann, & Collier, 2008; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). One potential explanation for this phenomenon is that

the victim, tired of being criticized, manipulated, and having her needs deferred, may lash out against her partner (Stets, 1992; Stets & Burke, 2005). Conflict and violence may be prominent when one partner dominates the other (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, *et al.*, 1990; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). With physical and psychological abuse so closely related, it seems reasonable to presume that a decreasing level of controlling behavior in relationships could propel the level of physical violence downward.

Interpersonal control (IPC) is one facet of psychological abuse and includes behavior that is intended to regulate or manipulate one's partner. IPC is the exercise of power and consists of criticism, manipulation, and challenging one's partner (Arias & Pape, 1999; Henning & Klesges, 2003; Sackett & Saunders, 1999; Stets, 1995a; Stets, 1995b; Stets & Burke, 1996).

Psychological abuse and control within relationships have been linked to numerous negative outcomes. For instance, victims are likely to suffer depression (Coker *et al.*, 2002; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010; Sackett & Saunders, 1999), low self-worth (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Sackett & Saunders, 1999), fear of their partners (Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Sackett & Saunders, 1999), loss of identity and sense of security (Larkin & Popaleni, 1994; Mills, 1985), anxiety (Arias & Pape, 1999; Coker *et al.*, 2002; Larkin & Popaleni, 1994; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), an eroded sense of self (Larkin & Popaleni, 1994; Murphy & Hoover, 1999), poor dyadic adjustment (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), substance abuse (Coker *et al.*, 2002; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), and even suicide (Coker *et al.*, 2002). In fact, studies have shown IPC to be more detrimental in its victims than physical abuse (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, & Hause, 1990; Henning & Klesges, 2003; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary, 1999;

Sackett & Saunders, 1999). As a result of demeaning or degrading comments from their partners, victims become depressed and unsure of themselves. They come to believe that they deserve this behavior from their partners, and they remain in the controlling relationship, dependent on their partners (Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Sackett & Saunders, 1999).

Larkin and Popaleni (1994) completed interviews with adolescent girls (ages 16 through 21) to learn specific ways their partners had used control. The participants described the use of criticism, diminishment, intimidation, and monitored activities. The participants had been asked to change their appearances to meet their partners' standards. The offenders monitored the victims' social activities with numerous phone calls or unexpectedly arriving at the victims' social events. The participants described limited involvement in social events, as their participation would upset their partners. This restriction could impede a victim's social development.

### **Factors Contributing to Interpersonal Control**

The use of IPC in relationships has been correlated with several variables. Low self-esteem (Stets & Hammons, 2002), a lack of empathy and non-White race (Stets, 1995a), low self-control (Winstok, 2009), and experiencing violence as a child and/or in previous relationships (Deal & Wampler, 1986) were variables related to a higher use of IPC.

Age, gender, and the stage of one's relationship were also related to the use of IPC. The correlation between IPC and age is an inverse U-shaped one. In other words, IPC increases as an individual ages from his teenage years, levels off as he hits mid-life, and then decreases as his age continues into late adulthood (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987).

The use of IPC also varies by gender. Women show increased use of both control and aggression (Archer, 2000; Stets, 1993; Stets & Burke, 2005; Stets & Hammons, 2002). One study found that as many as 99 percent of men had been victims of emotional abuse (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, *et al.*, 1990). Women complain, criticize and use negative talk with their spouses more often than men. In addition, women engaged in higher levels of minor aggression in marriage (Stets & Burke, 2005). It has been suggested that women use control in a relationship as a way to maintain intimacy with their partners (Stets & Hammons, 2002).

It is important to consider that the reported levels of IPC may not be accurate, especially when reported by men. IPC is not necessarily socially acceptable and it may be less socially acceptable for a man to report he is using or receiving abuse. Mayseless demonstrated this phenomenon in 1991. In this study, both partners reported on the levels of violence inflicted and received in their relationships. Thirty percent of women reported that they were victims of violence, but only twenty five percent of their male partners admitted to inflicting violence. Similarly, thirty six percent of women admitting to inflicting violence but only twenty four percent of men admitted to victimization.

Levels of IPC vary naturally over the course of a relationship. Research has demonstrated an inverse U-shaped relationship between IPC and the seriousness of the relationship. IPC generally increases as the relationship progresses from a casual stage to a somewhat serious stage, and decreases as the relationship matures to a more serious stage (Stets, 1993; Stets, 1995a). Individuals in serious relationships may have a greater need to use control as a means of keeping their relationship predictable (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). Similarly, Henning and Klesges (2003) found psychological abuse to be

less common in dating relationships than it was between married or previously married couples.

Other variables related to the use of IPC are trust in one's partner, attachment style, and satisfaction in his relationship. A discussion of these variables and their relation to IPC follows.

**Interpersonal trust.** Interpersonal trust has been defined as the belief that another person can be relied upon (Rotter, 1980), and will act favorably toward the former (Frost, Stimpson, & Maughan, 1978; Larzelere & Huston, 1980). It involves a willingness to put oneself at risk (Rempel *et al.*, 1985). Components of trust have been identified as faith, dependability, and predictability (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000).

Trust is necessary for people to live, work, and play together. It is crucial in all types of relationships but it is one of the most sought-after characteristics of a romantic relationship. Trust increases security in a relationship and allows an individual to be intimate and feel confident about self-disclosure (Butler, 2001; Larzelere & Huston, 1980; Rempel *et al.*, 1985; Righetti & Finkenauer, 2001; Rotter, 1980).

A man can trust another when three conditions have been satisfied: he must (1) realize he cannot reach his outcomes without relying on another, (2) realize that he may lose something if his partner does not act favorably towards him, and (3) realize that he has the ability to choose to be vulnerable by relying on another. Conversely, he is more likely to *gain* the trust of others if he is perceived to have benevolence, integrity, self-control, and ability (i.e. a mechanic can be trusted to replace brake pads because he is knowledgeable about cars) (Righetti & Finkenauer, 2011; Rotter, 1980).

**Attachment styles.** Attachment theory was developed as a way to explain the distressed behavior of infants once separated from their caregivers. John Bowlby defined three styles of infant attachment: secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant (Bartholomew, 1990; Fraley, 2004). In 1987, Hazan and Shaver were the first researchers to draw the connection between infant and adult attachment styles. Later researchers also demonstrated the importance of childhood experiences in forming expectations for adult relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Fraley & Shaver, 2000). If the development of a secure attachment style is hindered, an individual can suffer marital problems or even personality disorders as an adult (Bartholomew, 1990).

There are four categories of adult attachment that are formed by combinations of positive and negative views of the self and of others. They are: secure attachment (positive view of self and others), preoccupied attachment (negative view of self and positive view of others), fearful-avoidant attachment (negative view of self and others) and dismissing attachment (positive view of self and negative view of others) (Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998; Domingue & Mollen, 2009). Similar to the distribution of attachment style in infants, about half of all adults are thought to have a secure attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

The secure adult feels he is well liked and easy to get along with. He is confident in his ability to interact with others and desires mutual interdependence in a relationship (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). He is comfortable being in intimate relationships and depending on others (Collins & Read, 1990).

Secure adults are more likely to use self-disclosure because they trust their partners to be responsive to and supportive of them. An increase in self-disclosure results

in more positive and constructive communication between partners (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Hazan & Shaver 1987; Mikulincer, 1998; Morrison, Goodlin-Jones, & Urquiza, 1997). Secure individuals have higher levels of intimacy with others, greater levels of warmth and greater involvement in romantic relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Domingue & Mollen, 2009). Their relationships last longer and have higher levels of commitment, acceptance, support, interdependence, and trust, when compared to the relationships of insecure individuals. In general, secure adults will have more positive interpersonal interactions (Bartholomew, 1990).

Individuals with an insecure attachment style exhibit maladaptive interactions with others, negative emotions, and high levels of marital conflict (Besharat, 2003; Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998). They may withdraw from or cling to their partners, use a high level of verbal aggression, criticize, and make demands of their partners (Domingue & Mollen, 2009). One study demonstrated that hostile behavior could be observed in insecure individuals as young as toddlers (Bartholomew, 1990). Insecure adults doubt themselves and are less comfortable committing to a serious relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They want to be close to their partners but lack trust and feel uncertain about their partners' intentions (Besharat, 2003; Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998; Mikulincer, 1998). Insecure adults are more likely to use aggression and to be dissatisfied with their relationships (Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998; Morrison *et al.*, 1997). The three insecure attachment styles will be described below.

Preoccupied individuals have low self-esteem and high anxiety, but see others as trustworthy (Domingue & Mollen, 2009). They are high in emotional expressiveness, self-disclosure and dependence upon others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They

may cling to or be obsessed with their partners, receive comfort from being in a relationship, desire intimacy, but worry about abandonment (Besharat, 2003; Collins & Read, 1990; Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Gormley & Lopez, 2010). Preoccupied attachment style has been significantly related to anger, conflict, and abuse in relationships (O'Hearn & Davis, 1997).

Fearful-avoidant individuals have low self-esteem and believe others are unresponsive but they look to others to fulfill their needs (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Gormley & Lopez, 2010). They have low levels of self-disclosure, trust, assertiveness, romantic involvement, social skills, intimacy, and ability to depend on others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer, 1998). They report high levels of jealousy and emotional instability (Bartholomew, 1990). When trust in their partners is violated, they create distance in the relationship (Besharat, 2003; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer, 1998).

Adults with a fearful-avoidant or preoccupied attachment fear rejection and abandonment, which could lead them to use abusive behaviors out of anger or jealousy (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010). Preoccupied and fearful-avoidant adults report the most interpersonal difficulty (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998), presumably because they have negative views of others.

A dismissing individual believes others are unresponsive so he prefers to remain self-reliant (Domingue & Mollen, 2009). He is unlikely to be intimate with others, depend on others, or be involved romantically. However, he has high levels of self-esteem (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Gormley & Lopez, 2010). Research has shown dismissing adults to use behaviors that are manipulative, arrogant, or hostile



(Bartholomew, 1990). In short, insecure individuals are much less likely to have healthy, satisfying relationships.

**Relationship satisfaction.** For decades, researchers have tried to identify factors related to relationship satisfaction to improve relationship quality. This is important because satisfaction in one's relationship is positively related to overall life satisfaction and health (Culp & Beach, 1998; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Hawkins & Booth, 2005; Helms & Beuhler, 2007). Conversely, people who are unhappy in their relationships are more likely to suffer from depression (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010).

#### **How are these variables related to one another?**

***Trust and interpersonal control.*** Rotter (1980) examined the characteristics of high trusters (trust others easily) and low trusters (difficulty trusting others). High trusters were more likely to be trustworthy themselves and to respect the rights of others. A woman with low trust in her partner is (1) less likely to believe her partner's actions will benefit her, and (2) less likely to respect the rights of her partner. Thus, it is not surprising that a low truster will be more likely to use IPC (Frost, *et al.*, 1978). Butler (2001) showed that as one's trust in her partner decreases, her desire to control her partner increases.

***Adult attachment styles and interpersonal control.*** One's attachment style has an influence on his or her behavior while handling a conflict (Domingue and Mollen, 2009). So how might attachment style influence the use of IPC? There is little research examining the relationship between attachment style and interpersonal control. One study examining attachment style and emotional abuse found a relationship between the

two variables that was fully mediated by stress. In other words, individuals who had high levels of stress and an insecure attachment style exhibited abusive behaviors, but this relationship was not significant when stress was controlled for (Gormley & Lopez, 2010). Another study examined the interaction of attachment styles between partners and how this interaction relates to physical violence in relationships. Results showed that the highest likelihood of physical violence in a relationship occurs when an avoidant male is coupled with an anxious female (Maysel, 1991). This study did not examine the use of non-physical abuse.

Shovlin (1994) found no significant correlations between attachment styles and one's use of aggression in relationships. However, results showed trends suggesting a more frequent use of verbal aggression by dismissing and avoidant individuals.

Significant correlations were found between the receipt of psychological abuse and attachment styles; anxious individuals were most likely to receive psychological abuse, while secure individuals were least likely to be victims of abuse. Riggs and Kaminski (2010) found significant correlations between attachment anxiety and psychological aggression. This study found preoccupied and dismissive individuals to be the most likely to use psychological aggression, while fearful individuals were the least likely to use aggression.

***Relationship satisfaction and interpersonal control.*** Research has demonstrated that people who report aggression in their relationships are less likely to feel satisfied about the relationship (Bookwala & Zdebiuk, 1998; Henning & Klesges, 2003). It is unclear if the use of aggression causes individuals to feel unhappy about their relationships, or if dissatisfaction in the relationship leads to the use of aggression.

### **How are trust, attachment style, and relationship satisfaction related?**

Secure individuals are more likely to have intimacy, commitment, and acceptance in their relationships. Thus, these individuals are likely to have higher levels of trust in their partners and higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Fraley, 2004; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer, 1998; Morrison *et al.*, 1997).

If unwarranted, being mistrusting or overly trusting can negatively impact one's relationships. A lack of trust between partners can lead both partners to feel unhappy or conflicted. It may also lead to immoral behavior, such as cheating. For example, a woman may feel her infidelity is justified if she believes her partner is unfaithful (Rotter, 1980). Trust in one's partner has been positively related to love, commitment to one's partner, and satisfaction with the relationship (Larzelere & Huston, 1980; Rempel *et al.*, 1985; Righetti & Finkenauer, 2011). High levels of trust are also related to secure attachment style. This researcher was unable to locate any studies that looked at trust, attachment style, and IPC together.

### **Significance of the Study**

In summary, more than half of college women suffer psychological abuse. IPC is one characteristic of psychological abuse. Victims of IPC or psychological abuse suffer numerous negative consequences. People who have suffered both physical and psychological abuse report the outcomes of psychological abuse to be more detrimental. Very often, psychological abuse precedes or occurs with physical abuse. The concept of IPC is an important one to study, due to its negative effects on its victims. Examining factors that may lead to IPC may be useful in its prevention.

## **Purpose of the Study**

We know that insecure attachment style is related to low trust in a relationship, and that low trust is related to a greater level of IPC. Research has indicated conflicted results regarding the relationship between attachment style and IPC. The present study sought to further examine the relationship between attachment style and IPC, and examine the potential mediating effects of trust.

Research on relationship satisfaction tells us that people who are happy in their relationships are more likely to report secure attachment styles, high trust in their partners, and low levels of IPC. This study sought to replicate previous findings regarding these relationships.

This research examined adult attachment styles, trust, IPC, and relationship satisfaction among a sample recruited via (1) a social networking website, and (2) undergraduate enrollment in Essentials of Psychology at Rowan University. The following relationships are hypothesized.

1. Secure attachment styles, high levels of trust, and low levels of interpersonal control will be positively related to relationship satisfaction.
2. Insecure adults will engage in higher levels of interpersonal control in their relationships.
3. The relationship between attachment style and IPC will be mediated by trust.

## CHAPTER II

### Methodology

#### Sample

One hundred forty seven participants aged 18 and older were recruited for the study. The majority of the participants ( $n = 99$ ) were undergraduate students at Rowan University who were recruited via their enrollment in an Essentials of Psychology course. The remainder of participants had access to the study via a web link on a social networking site. Participants were 56 percent male and 44 percent female. Most (75.2 percent) were Caucasian and the majority (47 percent) had completed some college but had no degree. Age was positively skewed and ranged from 18 to 58 years old ( $M = 23$ ). Over half ( $n = 81$ ) of the participants were in relationships. Most participants in relationships considered their relationships to be “serious, though not engaged” (35 percent) and “somewhat serious” (23 percent). The length of the relationships ranged from half a month through 36 years, with the average relationship being about four years. See TABLE 1 for demographic data.

Characteristic	Percent of sample	Characteristic	Percent of sample	
Gender	Male	Education	< High School	
	Female		H.S. Diploma/GED	
Age	18-21		Some college/no degree	
	22-25		Associate's degree	
	26-29		Bachelor's degree	
	30-40		Graduate degree	
	40+			
Race	Caucasian		Relationship Stage	Casual
	African American			Somewhat serious
	American			Serious/not engaged
	Hispanic	Serious & engaged		
	Asian/Pacific Islander	Married		
	Multiracial	Relationship Length	< 6 months	
	Other		6 months – 1 year	
	1 – 3 years			
	3-5 years			
		5+ years		

## Procedure

The researcher obtained approval from Rowan University's Institutional Review Board prior to conducting the study. Students who were enrolled in Essentials of Psychology were able to sign up for the study through Sona Systems, a web-based human subject pool management software program. Sona Systems assigned each student a numerical ID for confidentiality purposes. Once participants signed up for the study, they were directed to the online survey hosted on Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The study was also accessible via a link to Survey Monkey on a Facebook page titled "Experiences in Dating Relationships."

First, participants were presented with the consent form detailing that they would be participating in a study examining various aspects of romantic relationships. Once individuals gave consent to participate in the study, they completed several questionnaires including the following: Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised, Trust in Interpersonal Relationships, Dyadic Trust Scale, Dyadic Satisfaction Scale, Multidimensional of Emotional Abuse, and a Control Scale. Further information on the measures is provided below. Participants were asked to provide demographics and information regarding the length and stage of their relationships. Participants were fully debriefed following the conclusion of the study. Rowan undergraduates received credit towards their Essentials of Psychology course.

## **Measures**

**Experiences in close relationships–revised (ECR-R).** The ECR-R is a 36-item self-report measure of adult attachment style (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Participants were asked to think about each statement and decide how it relates to their general experiences in relationships. Items were rated on a scale from one to seven. The ECR-R provides two subscale scores (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance). Attachment anxiety is characterized by fear of a partner’s rejection (measured by items such as, “My partner only seems to notice me when I’m angry,” “I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me,” and “When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me” (see Appendix A for full scale). Attachment avoidance is characterized by discomfort with intimacy and dependence on one’s partner (measured by such items as, “It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need,” “I feel comfortable depending on romantic

partners,” and “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down”. Items were rated on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). Items for each subscale were averaged to yield a total score (ranging from one to seven) with higher scores on the anxiety or avoidance subscale indicating higher levels of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, respectively. Higher scores on each of these subscales indicated lower levels of attachment security. Test-retest correlations for this measure were .91 for the anxiety subscale and .90 for the avoidance subscale (Fraley *et al.*, 2000). The measure had high reliability in the current sample ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Trust in interpersonal relationships scale.** This 8-item scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980) was designed to measure trust in intimate relationships. The scale asked participants for their level of agreement with such statements as, “My partner treats me fairly and justly,” “I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me,” and “My partner is truly sincere in his or her promises” (see Appendix B for full scale). Items were rated on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree). Items were summed to yield a total score (range 8-48), with higher scores denoting higher levels of interpersonal trust. This scale has demonstrated high reliability (.93) and high construct validity in prior research (Larzelere and Huston, 1980). Reliability for this sample was low at  $\alpha = .130$ .

**Trust scale.** The trust scale was revised by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1986), and was designed to measure trust within close relationship. After the researchers removed items that were not found to adequately measure trust, the scale comprised of 17 items. Some examples of items in this scale are, “My partner behaves in a very consistent manner,” “I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the



opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught,” and “When I am with my partner I feel secure in facing unknown new situations” (see Appendix C for full scale). Participants rated each item on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of trust in their partners (scores range from 0 to 102). Reliability for this sample was high,  $\alpha = .809$ .

**Dyadic satisfaction scale (DSS).** The DSS is a 10-item subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) that is designed to assess satisfaction in one’s relationship. Items on this subscale include, “Do you kiss your mate?” “Do you confide in your mate?,” and “Do you ever regret that you married?” See Appendix D for a full list of items on this scale. Participants were asked to rate each item on a scale from zero (all the time) to five (never). Items were summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of relationship satisfaction (total score ranges from zero to fifty). The reliability for the DSS was the highest of the subscales at .94 (Spanier, 1976); reliability for the current sample was lower at  $\alpha = .597$ .

**Multidimensional measure of emotional abuse (MMEA).** Murphy and Hoover’s (1999) MMEA is a 27-item self-report measure designed to assess one’s perception of emotional abuse over their partners or ex-partners in the last six months (as cited in Centers for Disease Control, 2006, p. 128). Examples of items on the scale are, “I have secretly searched through my partner’s belongings,” “I have criticized my partner’s appearance,” and “I have become angry enough to hurt my partner” (see Appendix E for full measure). Participants were asked to choose from one of eight responses ranging from “never” to “more than twenty times.” Subscales included denigration (reducing partner’s self-esteem), dominance/intimidation (threats, verbal

aggression and property damage), hostile withdrawal (to increase partner's insecurity about the relationship), and restrictive engulfment (restricting partner's behavior). Scores were summed, with totals ranging from 0 to 189. Higher scores indicated higher levels of emotional abuse. The MMEA has demonstrated internal consistency (subscales range from .89 to .89), convergent and discriminant validity (Centers for Disease Control, 2006; Murphy & Hoover, 1999). Reliability for the current sample was  $\alpha = .87$ .

**Control scale.** The 10-item control scale (Stets, 1993) is a self-report measure of an individual's perception of control over his or her partner. The scale consists of items such as, "I regulate who my partner sees," "I impose my will onto my partner," and "I keep my partner from doing things I do not approve of" (see Appendix F for full scale). Participants were asked to each item on a scale from one (never) to five (very often). Items were summed to yield a total score ranging from ten to fifty, with higher scores indicating a higher level of control over one's partner. Prior research has demonstrated adequate reliability of this measure (Stets, 1993; Stets, 1995b; Stets & Burke, 1996; Stets & Burke, 2005; Stets & Hammons, 2002). The current sample also demonstrated adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

### **Data Analyses**

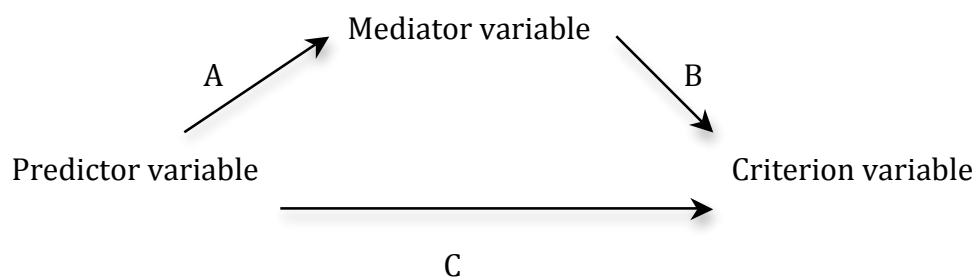
**Statistical analyses.** All statistical procedures were completed in SPSS version 18.0. Prior to running statistical analyses, basic descriptive tests were run to check the accuracy and normality of the data.

The total number of participants for each measure ranged from 69.4 percent ( $n = 102$ ) to 81.7 percent ( $n = 120$ ) of the total sample. Participants were excluded from an analysis if they were missing the total score for one of the measures. Independent *t*-tests

were conducted to compare scores for males to scores for females, and scores for participants in relationships, to scores for those that are not in relationships.

The two trust scores were combined for the trust variable. Trust scores ranged from 8 to 150. When the two trust measures were combined, reliability was high at  $\alpha = .805$ .

**Mediational analyses.** A variable is said to be a mediator when it accounts for the relationship between a predictor variable and a criterion variable. In this study, it was hypothesized that trust would mediate the relationship between adult attachment style (predictor variable) and interpersonal trust (criterion variable). There are two paths of causality in a mediator model. The first is the direct relationship between the predictor and criterion variable; the second is the impact of the predictor and mediator variables on the criterion variable. A path diagram may help to clarify the meaning of this model (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Mediational Model. This figure illustrates the pathways studied in a mediational model.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), there are four criterion needed for a variable to be considered a mediator: (a) the predictor variable must be significantly

related to the mediator, (b) the criterion variable must be significantly related to the mediator, (c) the predictor variable must be significantly related to the criterion variable, and (d) when paths A and B are controlled for, the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables is no longer significant. If these relationships are shown to exist, the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable must be greater when the mediator variable is included. In a perfect mediation, there is no relationship between the predictor and criterion variables (path C) when the mediator variable is controlled for.

Mediational models should be tested with a series of regression equations. The first equation examined how well attachment style accounted for variation in the trust (path A). The second equation examined how well attachment style predicted IPC (path B). The third equation examined how attachment style and trust work together to affect IPC (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Hierarchical linear regressions were used to test the third equation with the attachment style (predictor) entered in the first block, trust (mediator) entered in the second block, and interpersonal control serving as the criterion variable. Further, since men and women differ in control (Stets, 1993; Stets & Burke, 2005; Stets & Hammons, 2002), separate mediational models were conducted to examine whether these relationships are similar in both males and females. A second hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine whether attachment styles, trust and interpersonal control predict one's level of satisfaction in their relationships.

## CHAPTER III

### Results

#### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of one's attachment style and level of trust in his partner on the level of IPC used in the relationship. A majority of participants ( $n = 81$ ) reported that they were currently in a relationship; 51 participants were not in a relationship at the time of the survey, and the remainder of participants did not answer the question. Of the current sample, 80.3 percent ( $n = 117$ ) of participants reported that they had inflicted some degree of emotional abuse in the past six months. However, the overall amounts of emotional abuse and IPC used were on the low end of the range of scores. Overall levels of attachment and trust were high. See Table 2 for descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	M	SD
Attachment	132	174.49	39.61
Trust	131	111.57	30.77
Relationship Satisfaction	122	36.93	6.56
Emotional Abuse	123	27.45	22.83
Control	123	21.84	7.09

Correlations among variables indicated the following significant relationships. Attachment style was positively related to trust ( $r = .794, p = .000$ ) and negatively related to emotional abuse ( $r = -.250, p = .005$ ). Emotional abuse was inversely related to trust ( $r = -.348, p = .000$ ) and positively related to control ( $r = .535, p = .000$ ). Control was not significantly related to attachment ( $r = -.170, p = .060$ ), nor was it related to trust ( $r = -.188, p = .038$ ).

**Relationship satisfaction.** Results indicated that people who were satisfied in their relationships were more likely to have a secure attachment style ( $r = .477, p = .000$ ) and higher trust in their partners ( $r = .794, p = .000$ ). If satisfaction in the relationship was high, control ( $r = -.338, p = .000$ ) and emotional abuse ( $r = -.459, p = .000$ ) were likely to be lower. Intercorrelations among all variables are shown in Table 3.

### **Comparison of Groups**

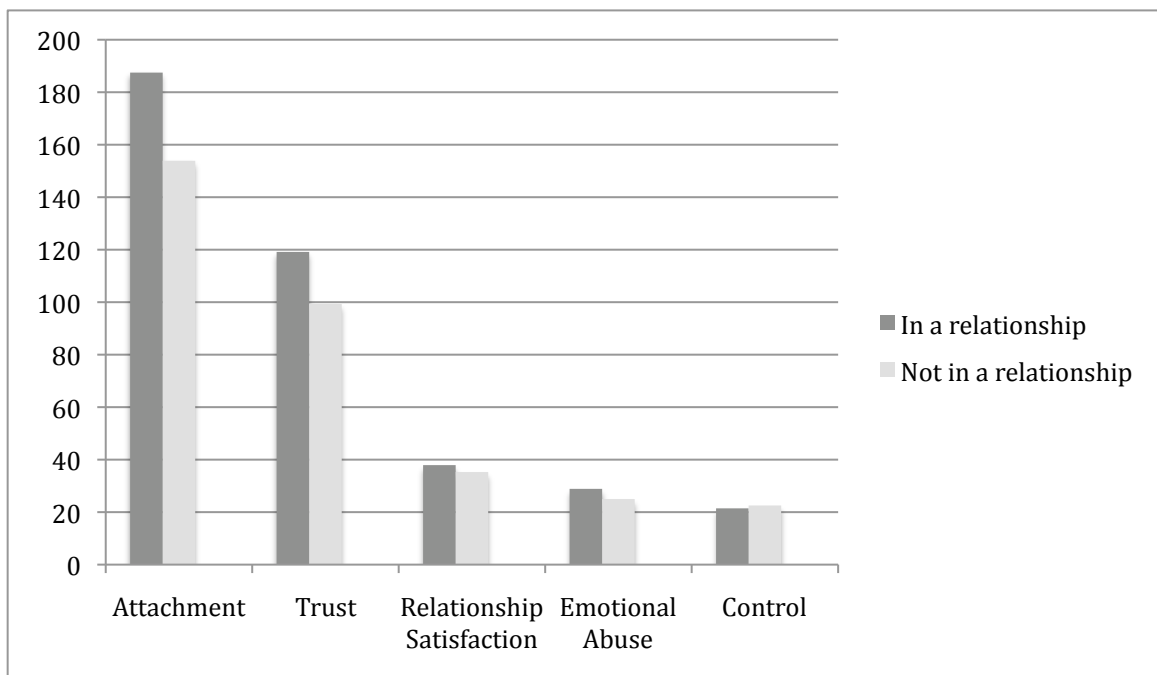
**Gender differences.** An independent  $t$ -test was conducted to compare scores on each measure for males and females. On the control measure, men ( $M = 22.54, SD = 6.46$ ) and women ( $M = 20.88, SD = 6.46$ ) did not differ significantly ( $t(121) = 1.278, p = .204$ ). Similarly, males ( $M = 28.14, SD = 26.53$ ) and females ( $M = 26.50, SD = 16.72$ ) reported similar levels of emotional abuse ( $t(121) = .392, p = .696$ ). On the trust scale, males ( $M = 109.62, SD = 26.35$ ) and females ( $M = 177.95, SD = 46.80$ ) reported similar scores ( $t(129) = -.826, p = .410$ ). Likewise, men ( $M = 171.78, SD = 32.99$ ) and women ( $M = 177.95, SD = 46.80$ ) did not differ significantly on trust ( $t(130) = -.887, p = .377$ ). Since there were no significant differences found for males and females, analyses for both groups were run together.

Table 3. <i>Correlations Among All Variables Studied</i>					
		Attachment	Trust	Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional Abuse
Trust	<i>r</i>	.794**			
	<i>p</i>	.000			
Relationship Satisfaction	<i>r</i>	.477**	.574**		
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000		
Emotional Abuse	<i>r</i>	-.250**	-.348**	-.459**	
	<i>p</i>	.005	.000	.000	
Control	<i>r</i>	-.170	-.188	-.338**	.535**
	<i>p</i>	.060	.038	.000	.000

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$

**Differences by relationship status.** An independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the attachment scores of participants in relationships to those not currently in relationships. The two groups differed significantly on attachment scores ( $t(130) = 5.192, p = .000$ ). Specifically, participants in relationships ( $M = 187.47, SD = 36.12$ ) had significantly higher attachment scores than participants who were not in relationships ( $M = 153.88, SD = 36.29$ ). The effect size was  $d = .93$ . Significant differences were also noted between these groups on the trust measure ( $t(129) = 3.764, p = .000$ ). Specifically,

participants in relationships ( $M = 119.15$ ,  $SD = 27.78$ ) had significantly more trust than participants who were not in relationships ( $M = 99.30$ ,  $SD = 31.67$ ). The effect size was  $d = .67$ . Participants in relationships did not differ significantly from those not in relationships on their reported use of control and emotional abuse. Since differences were noted on attachment and trust scores, regression analyses were run separately for participants depending on their relationship status. Figure 2 compares the scores on each measure for participants who were dating and those who were not dating.



*Figure 2.* Scores on each measure as a variation of relationship status. This figure shows the differences on each measure for both single and dating participants.

For participants that were not currently dating, correlations among variables became non-significant. For these individuals, emotional abuse was no longer correlated



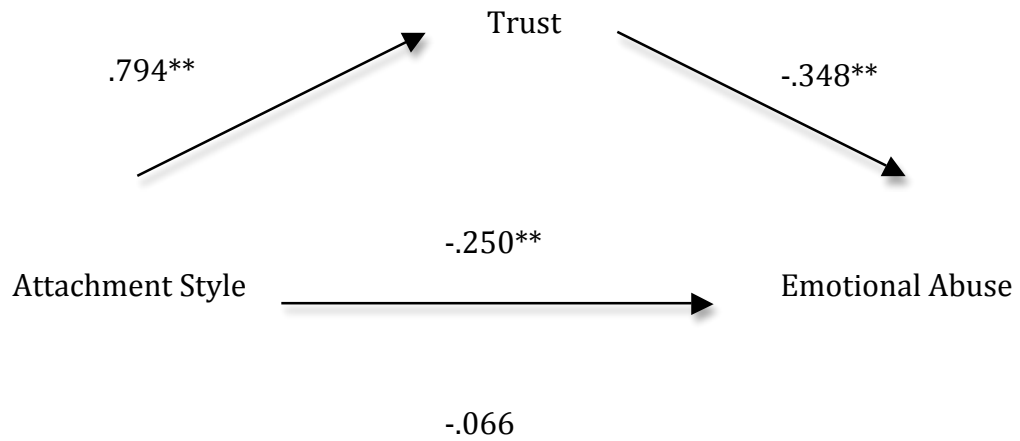
with attachment, trust, or control. Relationship satisfaction was no longer correlated with attachment, trust, or control.

For participants that were in relationships, correlations among variables mostly remained the same. The only exception is that the relationship between trust and control was negatively correlated ( $r = -.289, p = .010$ ) for these participants.

### **Regression Analyses**

For a model to demonstrate mediation, all three variables must be significantly correlated (Baron & Kenny, 1986). For the total sample, control was not significantly correlated with trust or attachment style. For participants who were in relationships, control was related to trust but still was not related to attachment style. Thus, a mediational model was not tested with control as the dependent variable.

For subjects who were not in dating relationships, emotional abuse was no longer related to attachment style or trust, so a mediational model was not tested. For participants who were dating, all three variables were significantly correlated so a mediational model was tested with these variables. A series of linear regressions was tested on these variables. Attachment was found to significantly predict emotional abuse ( $\beta = -.250, p = .005$ ) and trust ( $\beta = .794, p = .000$ ). Trust was found to significantly predict emotional abuse ( $\beta = -.348, p = .000$ ). The overall hierarchical regression model was significant ( $F = 9.084, p = .000$ ). Attachment style significantly predicted emotional abuse ( $\beta = -.344, t = -3.189, p = .002$ ). This relationship became non-significant once trust was entered into the model ( $\beta = -.066, t = -.454, p = .651$ ). Thus, trust significantly mediated the relationship between attachment style and emotional abuse ( $\beta = -.392, t = -2.678, p = .009$ ). Figure 3 demonstrates the mediational model for these variables.



Note:  $** p < .01$

Figure 3. Results of regression analyses demonstrating mediation, showing  $\beta$  weights for each relationship. The initial path between attachment and emotional abuse is indicated by the  $\beta$  above the line connecting these two variables. The  $\beta$  under this line indicates the relationship once trust was controlled for.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications for Counseling**

This research aimed to examine the contribution of one's attachment style and trust in his partner to his use of IPC in a relationship. IPC was measured both by an emotional abuse measure and a control measure. The study also examined the relationships between relationship satisfaction and each of the above variables.

Throughout the remainder of the paper, examples from the results will be given pertaining to an imaginary couple, Kelly and Jason, a couple complaining of unhappiness with their relationship. Jason feels as if Kelly is always "nagging" him, and that she's not happy with anything he does. Kelly was betrayed by previous boyfriends and now has difficulty trusting others, including Jason.

#### **Relationship Satisfaction**

It is important to study relationship satisfaction and factors that are related to it because the quality of one's relationship contributes to the quality of his life. The first hypothesis posited that high levels of attachment and trust, and low levels of IPC would be correlated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction. The results from this sample support this hypothesis for participants who were currently dating. Participants who felt they could rely on their partners to be supportive would feel more comfortable opening up and being honest in their relationship. Increasing self-disclosure can lead to more positive communication, which can lead to partners feeling more satisfied. Conversely, someone like Kelly, with an insecure attachment style, may feel that her partner will not be responsive and should not be trusted. This can negatively impact communication between Kelly and Jason and thus, negatively impact the quality of their relationship.

Although we know relationship satisfaction and IPC are inversely correlated, we do not yet know why. It could be that Kelly is dissatisfied with her relationship and begins to manipulate Jason's behavior until it becomes that which makes Kelly feel satisfied. Conversely, IPC could precede dissatisfaction; Jason might be satisfied in his relationship until he starts suffering emotional abuse from Kelly.

### **Factors Contributing to the use of IPC**

The second hypothesis expected that insecure adults would engage in higher levels of IPC; this hypothesis was partially supported. Insecure people scored higher on the emotional abuse measure, but not more on the control measure. A possible explanation for this discrepancy could be that the emotional abuse measure was more behaviorally based. For example, the control scale asks if I have "tried to impose my will onto my partner," where the emotional abuse scale asks specifically if I have "tried to stop my partner from seeing certain friends" or "secretly searched through his belongings." If Kelly doesn't know what controlling behavior is, she may not endorse the control scale item, even though we know Kelly to be controlling. However, the MMEA asks about Kelly's behavior, which she may have an easier time identifying. Additionally, if Kelly is embarrassed about being controlling, she may be more likely to admit that she has searched through Jason's phone, than she is to admit that in general, she imposes her will onto him.

Previous literature has shown that the use of control and emotional abuse differs by gender. Specifically, women were found to use IPC more than men. In the current study, there was no significant difference between men and women on any of the variables studied. Three of the previous studies showing this relationship studied

different samples (i.e. married couples) and/or the effect size for this correlation was minimal. It is possible that there is not, in fact, a difference between men's and women's use of control, but that the genders differ in the ways that they use control. For example, men may use more explicit control (making threats or using physical abuse) while a woman may be more likely to subtly demean her partner. Thus, the level of control endorsed by each gender may depend on the scale used to measure control, and how the scale defines control.

The study also examined the difference between dating participants and single participants. Dating participants had higher levels of trust and more secure attachment than their single counterparts. Secure adults, who can easily trust others, may be more likely than insecure adults to seek out relationships. Kelly, an insecure adult with low trust in her partners, does not expect relationships to be satisfying so she's not likely to seek them out. Since the dating and single participants differed on trust and attachment, mediational models were tested separately for dating and single participants. The two groups reported similar use of emotional abuse and control.

Consistent with prior research, results of the current study indicated that participants with secure attachments were more likely than insecure individuals to trust their partners. Secure individuals feel that their partners can be depended on and will respond to their needs. Conversely, insecure individuals have negative views of others and are not likely to have trust in their partners.

For dating participants in the sample, a lack of trust led them to be more likely to use emotional abuse and control. This finding supports prior research on the topic. If Kelly does not trust Jason, she does not believe that his intentions will be favorable to

her. If she feels that he does not have her best interests at heart, she may fear that the relationship will not go her way. She will be more likely to try to manipulate Jason's behavior into behavior that will please her. If she trusted Jason to act in her benefit, she would not feel the need to manipulate his behavior.

Previous research tells us that secure attachment is related to high trust, and high trust is related to low IPC. Thus, the current study was interested in a possible relationship between attachment and IPC. In this study, participants in relationships who had secure attachment were less likely to use emotional abuse. However, they were not less likely to use control. Again, this discrepancy is being attributed to the differences in scales.

The third hypothesis indicated that trust would mediate the relationship between attachment and IPC. Recall that for mediation to occur, all three variables must be significantly correlated with one another. For single participants, this condition was not met, and mediation was not tested. For dating participants, secure attachment, high trust, and low emotional abuse were all related to one another. The last condition of mediation requires that attachment predicts emotional abuse until trust is controlled for. This hypothesis was supported, as attachment no longer predicted emotional abuse when trust was controlled. Thus, trust was found to mediate the relationship between attachment and emotional abuse for dating participants. In other words, there was no direct relationship between attachment and emotional abuse once trust was removed from the equation.

## **Limitations**

The current study had several limitations. First, alike most studies measuring variables of this nature, measures were self-report. Subjects may have answered in such a way that made them appear favorable. It is especially difficult to measure IPC with self-report measures, as high scores on this measure are not necessarily socially acceptable. Kelly may not be honest about the amount of emotional abuse she engages in, as this may be embarrassing to her.

Second, the participants in this sample were mostly college students, presumably early in their dating years. At this age, individuals may be fundamentally different than adults who are more experienced daters. Their levels of IPC, trust, and attachment may differ as they mature. Also, young people are still self-evaluating and may have been less comfortable being honest about any unfavorable behavior. Results from the study may not generalize to a broader population.

Third, due to the nature of correlational studies, it is not possible to discern the directions of the relationships studied. However, an experimental study looking at these variables would be difficult, as it may not be possible to manipulate relationship satisfaction, IPC, trust, or attachment. If possible, it would be interesting to see if high emotional abuse and low trust lead a person to feel dissatisfied, or if it is the person's dissatisfaction with the relationship that causes them to lose trust or use emotional abuse.

Lastly, the study had a high attrition rate. The combined surveys had a high number of items and some subjects stopped answering questions after a certain point in the survey. It is not clear if these subjects dropped out due to the length of the study or the nature of the questions towards the end (later questions asked about infliction of

control and emotional abuse). Thus, it is possible that subjects who dropped out did so because they were uncomfortable answering questions regarding these behaviors. A man who is embarrassed about his use of IPC may skip these questions, and his missing data could impact the results of the study.

### **Future Directions**

Much of the IPC research examined for this study focused on individuals who had been both physically and emotionally abused by their partners. This researcher was unable to locate any studies that excluded individuals who have suffered physical abuse. It would be interesting to assess the differences between individuals who have experienced only emotional abuse to those who have experienced both. These groups may differ in terms of the methods they use to cope with the abuse and the negative consequences they suffer as results of the abuse. If there is a population of people who have only been emotionally abused, they may be difficult to find. Victims of physical abuse frequently get the law and other support systems involved, whereas victims of only emotional abuse may not do the same.

Although previous literature has demonstrated an inverse relationship between IPC and control, the research on this relationship is sparse. It would be interesting to assess this relationship for potential mediating variables. Further research could also ask participants for their reasoning, if they can identify it, for using controlling behaviors. Some explanations may lead back to a lack of trust in the relationship.

Lastly, research tells us that men and woman use IPC differently. Future research could further examine the ways that IPC differs as a function of gender. Women may be



more likely to use subtle forms of control (i.e. snooping), while a man may be more likely to use more explicit controlling behavior.

### **Conclusions and Implications for Counseling**

The current study examined the effects of attachment style and trust on one's use of emotional abuse and control within a relationship. It also studied the interrelations among these variables and relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that trust mediated the relationship between attachment and emotional abuse for dating participants. Consistent with previous findings, the current study demonstrated that relationship satisfaction is positively related to trust and attachment style, and negatively related to emotional abuse and control.

What does this mean in therapy? Recall Kelly and Jason, who have presented with unhappiness in their relationship. After several sessions, the counselor notes that Kelly is verbally aggressive towards Jason. It is likely that Jason will be seen as the only victim in this exchange. A counselor may even feel it is in Jason's benefit to end the relationship with Kelly. It is important to remember that Kelly may be using emotional abuse, not simply to be mean, but because of an issue with which she is struggling. She may even be trying to control Jason's behavior because this is the only way she knows how to have her needs met. Maybe Jason isn't responsive to Kelly, so she is attempting to manipulate Jason's behavior to benefit her. In this case, it may be helpful for a counselor to work on increasing positive communication between Kelly and Jason. If Kelly can appropriately make her needs known to Jason, he may be able to better meet her needs.

Since emotional abuse appears to be present in this relationship, it may be beneficial to have Kelly and Jason each assess the levels of trust and satisfaction in the relationship. It may also help to assess their individual types of attachment. As we learned from the current study, Kelly is likely to have low trust in Jason and an insecure attachment. Since there was no direct relationship found between attachment and emotional abuse, a good starting point in counseling may be to build trust between Kelly and Jason. With increased trust in Jason, Kelly may start to believe that Jason's actions will benefit her, as well as him. If Kelly can believe this, she may no longer need to control Jason's actions. Similarly, if Kelly's trust increases and emotional abuse decreases, perhaps both partners can feel more satisfied with the relationship.

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## Appendix A

### Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationship, not just what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by choosing either:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Disagree somewhat   Neutral   Agree somewhat   Agree  
Strongly Agree

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.
16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.



17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
30. I tell my partner just about everything.
31. I talk things over with my partner.
32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
36. My partner really understands me and my needs.

## APPENDIX B

### Trust in Interpersonal Relationships Scale

Answer the following questions using the following choices:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Moderately disagree   Neutral   Moderately agree   Agree

Strongly Agree

1. My partner is primarily interested in his or her own welfare.
2. There are times when my partner cannot be trusted.
3. My partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me
4. I feel that I can trust my partner completely.
5. My partner is truly sincere in his or her promises.
6. I feel that my partner does not show me enough consideration.
7. My partner treats me fairly and justly.
8. I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.

## APPENDIX C

### Trust Scale

Please answer the questions below using the following choices:

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Moderately disagree   Neutral   Moderately agree   Agree  
Strongly Agree

1. My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities, which other partners find too threatening.
2. Even when I don't know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself; even those things that I'm afraid of.
3. Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.
4. I am not certain my partner won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me.
5. My partner is very unpredictable. I never know how he/she is going to act from one day to the next.
6. I feel very uncomfortable when my partner has to make decisions that will affect me personally.
7. I have found that my partner is unusually dependable, especially when it comes to things that are important to me.
8. My partner behaves in a very consistent manner.
9. Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare.
10. Even if I have no reason to expect my partner to share things with me, I still feel certain that he/she will.
11. I can rely on my partner to react in a positive way when I expose y weaknesses to him/her.

12. When I share my problems with my partner, I know he/she will respond in a loving way even before I say anything.
13. I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught.
14. I sometimes avoid my partner because he/she is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something that might create conflict.
15. I can rely on my partner to keep the promises he/she makes.
16. When I am with my partner I feel secure in facing unknown new situations.
17. Even when my partner makes excuses that sound rather unlikely, I am confident that he/she is telling the truth.

## APPENDIX D

### Dyadic Satisfaction Scale

Answer the questions below using the following choices:

All the time   Most of the time   More often than not   Occasionally   Rarely   Never

1. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?

2. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?

3. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

4. Do you confide in your mate?

5. Do you ever regret that you are with your partner?

6. How often do you and your partner quarrel?

7. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"

Answer the question below using the following choices:

Every day   Almost every day   Occasionally   Rarely   Never

8. Do you kiss your mate?

Answer following questions with one of the choices below.

9. Please choose the degree of happiness of your relationship.

Extremely   Fairly   A little   Happy   Very   Extremely   Perfect

10. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

a. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does.

b. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do all I can* to see that it does.

c. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.

d. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing now* to help it succeed.

e. It would be nice if it succeeded, but *I refuse to do any more than I am doing now* to keep the relationship going.

f. My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more than I can do* to keep the relationship going.

## APPENDIX E

### Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse

The following questions ask about the relationship with your partner or ex-partner. Please report how often each of these things has happened in the last six months. Please choose letter indicating the number of times you have done each of these things.

a. Once            b. Twice            c. 3-5 times            d. 6-10 times            e. 11-20 times            f. More than 20 times

g. Never in the past six months, but it has happened before            h. This has never happened

1. Asked your partner where they had been or who they were with in a suspicious manner.

2. Secretly searched through your partner's belongings.

3. Tried to stop your partner from seeing certain friends or family members.

4. Complained that your partner spends too much time with friends.

5. Got angry because your partner went somewhere without telling you.

6. Tried to make your partner feel guilty for not spending enough time together.

7. Checked up on your partner by asking friends or relatives where they were or who they were with.

8. Called your partner worthless.

9. Called your partner ugly.

10. Criticized your partner's appearance.

11. Called your partner a loser, failure, or similar term.

12. Belittled your partner in front of other people.

13. Said that someone else would be a better partner

14. Became so angry that you were unwilling to talk.

15. Acted cold or distant when angry.

16. Refused to have any discussion of a problem.

17. Changed the subject on purpose when your partner was trying to discuss a problem.
18. Refused to acknowledge a problem that your partner felt was important.
19. Sulked or refused to talk about an issue.
20. Intentionally avoided your partner during a conflict or disagreement.
21. Became angry enough to frighten your partner.
22. Put your face right in front of your partner's to make a point more forcefully.
23. Threatened to hit your partner.
24. Threatened to throw something at your partner.
25. Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something in front of your partner.
26. Drove recklessly to frighten your partner
27. Stood or hovered over your partner during a conflict or disagreement.



## APPENDIX F

### Control Scale

Please report how often each of these things has happened *in the past twelve months*. Please circle a number using the scale below to indicate how often you have done each of the following things.

1 = Never      2 = Seldom      3 = Sometimes      4 = Fairly Often      5 =  
Very Often

1. I make my partner do what I want.
2. I keep my partner in line.
3. I impose my will onto my partner.
4. I keep tabs on my partner.
5. I regulate who my partner sees.
6. I supervise my partner.
7. I keep my partner from doing things I don't approve of.
8. If I don't like what my partner is doing, I make him/her stop.
9. I set the rules in my relationship with my partner.

I let my partner do what he/she wants.