

Experiment 1

Background Relationship Quality: #1-13; Typical Touch #14-15

HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARTNER

Now, please take a moment to think about your relationship with your partner, and answer the questions below.

- (1) All things considered, how satisfied do you feel with your relationship?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not At All Completely

- (2) Do you feel committed to maintaining your relationship with your partner?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not At All Completely
Committed Committed

- (3) How does your relationship compare to your ideal?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Far From Ideal It Is Ideal

- (4) All things considered, how happy are you in your relationship?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not At All Completely

- (5) How often do you and your partner get on each other's nerves?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Never Sometimes Every Day

- (6) How often does your partner make you feel angry?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Never Sometimes Every Day

- (7) How likely is it that your relationship will end in the near future?

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not At All Extremely
Likely to End Likely to End

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not At All Likely Extremely Likely

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
- Not At All Completely
- Attached Attached

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
None A Moderate A Great
At All Amount Deal

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
- Never Have Such Fantasies
- Often Have Such Fantasies

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
- Not at all Extremely
Close Close

- 0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not at all Completely

(14) I am usually very comfortable being touched by my partner.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Not at all Completely
True True

(15) How typical or common is it for you and your partner to touch...

...when you are in public?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7
Never Very often

...when you are discussing something stressful?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7
Never Very often

... while you are relaxing together, like when you are watching tv?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7
Never Very often

Perceived Stress

The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, please indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way by writing a number to the right of each item.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Almost Sometimes Fairly Very
Never Often Often

(1) In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? _____

(2) In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? _____

(3) In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? _____

(4) In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? _____

Relational Disagreements

YOUR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

Instructions: Below is a list of areas where many couples have disagreements. We would like to get some idea of how relevant each area is to you. In the first column, please indicate how severe the problem is **CURRENTLY** (in your opinion) by writing a number from 0 to 100. A zero indicates that the problem is not severe and a 100 indicates that it is a very severe problem area. In the second column, please write the number of years, months, weeks, or days that this area has been a problem.

For example:	How severe?	How long?
Alcohol and drugs	90	2.5 yrs.

This indicates that alcohol and drugs are in your opinion a serious problem and that it has been a problem for about 2 ½ years.

	How severe?	How long?
1. Money		
2. Communication		
3. In-laws/Family		
4. Religion		
5. Recreation		
6. Friends		
7. Alcohol and Drugs		
8. Children		
9. Jealousy		
10. Work		
11. Housework/Distribution of Labor		
12. Support		
13. Independence		
14. Time Together		

Please feel free to write down any other problem area(s) which you may feel are relevant.

15.		
16.		

Demographics

YOUR BACKGROUND

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____ Female _____ Male _____ Other
3. Education (please check one):
_____ did not complete high school
_____ completed high school
_____ some college credits
_____ Associate's degree
_____ Bachelor's degree
_____ some graduate school
_____ professional degree (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D. etc.)
5. Your race (please check as many as apply):
_____ American Indian/ Alaska Native
_____ Asian
_____ Black or African American
_____ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
_____ White (Caucasian)
_____ Other (please specify _____)
6. Your ethnicity:
_____ Not Hispanic or Latino
_____ Hispanic or Latino
4. Your household income (please check one):
_____ \$0 - \$19,999
_____ \$20,000 – \$39,999
_____ \$40,000 - \$59,999
_____ \$60,000 - \$79,999
_____ \$80,000 - \$99,999
_____ \$100,000 - \$119,999
_____ \$120,000 or over

YOUR RELATIONSHIP HISTORY

1. How long have you been with your romantic partner? _____ Years _____ Months
2. Are you married to your romantic partner? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, please provide your wedding date _____/_____/_____
3. Are you and your romantic partner currently living together? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, approximately how long have you been living together? _____ Years _____ Months
4. Are you romantically involved with any other people right now (besides your romantic partner)?
_____ Yes _____ No
5. Do you have any children with your romantic partner? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, how many children do you have? _____

Thank you for completing these questionnaires. Please open your door to let the experimenter know you are finished.

State Security

How Do You FEEL RIGHT NOW? (SSS)

Please think about how you are feeling ***right now***. Then rate the extent to which you feel each of the following emotions by placing a number between 1 and 6 in the space to the right of each one. Please be honest so that we can understand how you truly feel.

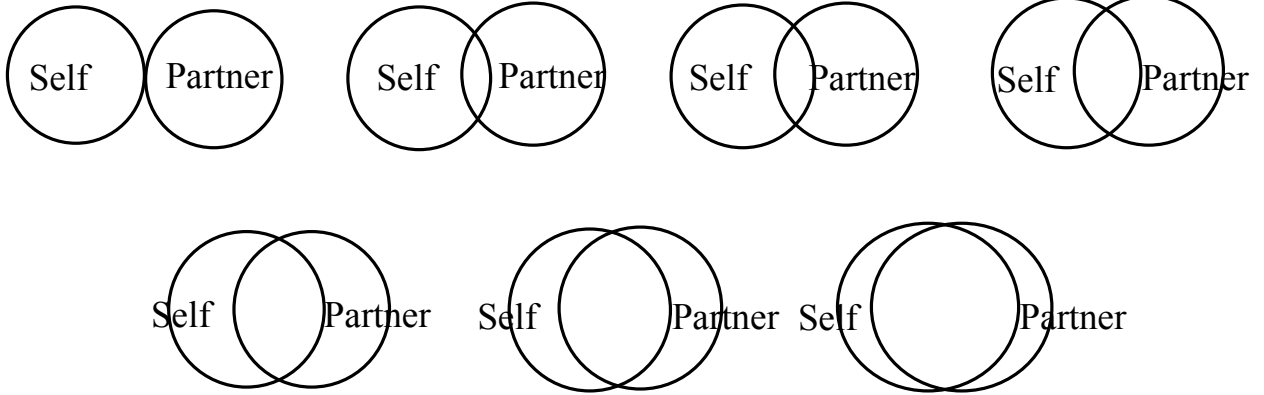
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6
Not at all Very much

Comforted	_____	Supported	_____	Attentive	_____
Nervous	_____	Stressed out	_____	Enthusiastic	_____
Secure	_____	Calm	_____	Encouraged	_____
Anxious	_____	Loved	_____	Cared for	_____
Safe	_____	Excited	_____	Upset	_____
Worried	_____	Protected	_____	Unthreatened	_____

Cognitive Interdependence

It is normal for feelings in relationships to change minute-to-minute. For the questions on this page, think about how you're feeling right now.

Circle the picture below the best represents your relationship with your partner at this time.



Indicate your agreement with the following statements right now:

I feel a sense of “oneness” with my partner.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
Not At All Extremely

I feel like my partner and I are on the same team.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
Not At All Extremely

I feel more connected with my partner than usual.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
Not At All Extremely

How Do You Feel Right Now?

Please think about how you are feeling ***right now***. Then rate the extent to which you feel each of the following emotions by writing a number between 1 and 6 in the space to the right of each one. Please be honest so that we can understand how you truly feel.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6	
Not at all	Very much
Comforted _____	Supported _____
Nervous _____	Stressed out _____
Secure _____	Calm _____
Anxious _____	Loved _____
Safe _____	Excited _____
Worried _____	Protected _____
	Unthreatened _____
	Attentive _____
	Enthusiastic _____
	Encouraged _____
	Cared for _____
	Upset _____

Perceived Partner Responsiveness

YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR PARTNER (PPR)

Please answer the following questions about how you feel toward you partner **RIGHT NOW**.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
not at all		somewhat		moderately		very		completely
true		true		true		true		true

RIGHT NOW, my partner...

1. ... sees the "real" me. _____
2. ... "gets the facts right" about me. _____
3. ... esteems me, shortcomings and all. _____
4. ... knows me well. _____
5. ... values and respects the whole package that is the "real" me. _____
6. ... understands me. _____
7. ... really listens to me. _____
8. ... expresses liking and encouragement for me. _____
9. ... seems interested in what I am thinking and feeling. _____
10. ... values my abilities and opinions. _____
11. ... is on "the same wavelength" with me. _____
12. ... is responsive to my needs. _____

YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. **RIGHT NOW**, how much tension is there between you and your partner?

2. **RIGHT NOW**, how satisfied do you feel with your relationship?

3. **RIGHT NOW**, how happy are you in your relationship?

3

Perceptions of the Conflict Discussion

YOUR DISAGREEMENT DISCUSSION

Please think about the disagreement topic you discussed with your partner and how likely you are to successfully resolve it. On the lines below, please ***list the disagreement topic you discussed***, then ***rate the degree to which you think you'll successfully resolve or deal with the problem***. Please use the following scale to make your ratings.

- 1 = Not at all likely to successfully resolve that disagreement
- 2 = Very small probability that we will successfully resolve that disagreement
- 3 = Somewhat likely to successfully resolve that disagreement
- 4 = Very likely to successfully resolve that disagreement
- 5 = Almost certain that we will successfully resolve that disagreement

(1) Disagreement: _____ Rating: _____

(2) Before this discussion, how much have you already talk about this disagreement?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not At All Very Much

(3) Overall, how upsetting or stressful is this disagreement for you?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not At All Extremely
Upsetting/Stressful Upsetting/Stressful

(4) Overall, how upsetting or stressful is this disagreement for your partner?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not At All Extremely
Upsetting/Stressful Upsetting/Stressful

(5) To what extent do you feel that it is ***possible*** to resolve or deal with this disagreement successfully?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Possible At All Definitely Possible

(6) To what extent do you have the ability to overcome your disagreement?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not at All Very Much

(7) Overall, how satisfied were you with the discussion you just had?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not at all Extremely
Satisfied Satisfied

(8) How did discussing your disagreement right now make you feel about the problem?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very anxious & Very good &
uncertain about confident about
solving the problem solving the problem

(9) To what extent did you make progress on solving your disagreement as a result of your discussion?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Did Not Resolve Resolved It
It At All A Great Deal

(10) If you circled 2, 3, 4, or 5 for the above question, please answer the one below:
To what extent are you happy and satisfied with the way you resolved this disagreement as a result of your discussion?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not at all Extremely
Satisfied Satisfied

Perceptions of Partner

YOUR PARTNER DURING THE DISCUSSION TASK

How would you describe **YOUR PARTNER** during the time you were discussing your topic of disagreement? Using the scale below, please rate the extent to which you think each adjective listed below describes your partner during that time. Remember that your answers are completely confidential, and your partner will not see any of your responses. *Please answer based on your discussion with your partner TODAY and not based on previous discussions you may have had.*

- 1 = Not At All
2 = A Little Bit
3 = Somewhat
4 = Very Much
5 = Extremely

During the time we were discussing,

MY PARTNER WAS...

understanding	_____	angry	_____	affectionate	_____
annoying	_____	supportive	_____	frustrating	_____
positive	_____	thoughtful/considerate	_____	kind	_____
helpful	_____	rude	_____	critical	_____
complaining	_____	distant	_____	loving	_____
caring/ compassionate	_____	cooperative	_____	opinionated/ overbearing	_____
calm/peaceful	_____	argumentative	_____	negative	_____
sensitive	_____	dismissive	_____	bossy	_____

Manipulation Instructions

Lego Activity (6 minutes)

Okay, we're all set with that. Thanks for your patience. Now we're going to have you work on a new task. For this task, you will be building together with lego blocks, but you will each only be able to use one hand. We're interested in your experiences during this task, but don't worry about paying attention to anything in particular during the task. Just try to engage naturally.

Object touch: To make sure that you remember to use only one hand during the activity, please each hold on to one of these objects. (*Place two weights between couple; instruct one to hold the top of one and one to hold the bottom of the other so that their hands don't touch. Left to right...*) So you hold it with you left hand, and you hold it in your right hand. This will ensure that you remember to use only one hand during the activity. Please continue to hold the weights for the entire activity, keep the weights resting on the sofa, and please stay seated on the sofa. Also, please do not touch each other during the task. You can begin holding the weights now. (*Wait to make sure they follow instructions*).

Touch condition: To make sure that you remember to use only one hand during the activity, please hold hands using your hands that are closest to one another. (*Left to right...*) So your left hand and your right hand). This will ensure that you use remember to use only one hand during the activity. Please continue to hold hands for the entire activity, keep your hands resting on the sofa, and please stay seated on the sofa. You can begin holding hands now (*Wait to make sure they follow instructions*).

Please don't discuss these instructions during the activity. We can discuss the instructions at the end of the study. You can begin the building activity now! Build whatever you'd like, but build one thing together. I'll be back in a few minutes.

Conflict Discussion [6 minutes]

For the next part of the activity, we would like you to have a discussion together, and we'd also like you to have this discussion in a new way. To give you something to talk about, on this index card I wrote down an area of disagreement in your relationship. Remember, the questionnaire earlier asked you to rate the degree to which you and your partner disagree on a list of areas in which most couples tend to have disagreements. We just selected one of these topics that both of you rated as an area of disagreement as a topic of discussion.

Here's how this works: I'll give you the topic to discuss and you can decide if you want to discuss it. Then, I'll leave the room, and you can have a brief discussion. We just ask that you discuss the topic in whatever way feels right to you. There are no right or wrong ways to talk about it. We're just interested in learning more about how people think and feel after having these types of discussions and what it's like to have these discussions in new ways. Again, we'll have you use only one hand during this discussion task...

Object touch: so please hold on to the weights during the activity to make sure you use one hand.

Touch condition: Please hold hands during the activity to make sure you use one hand.

If you don't want to discuss the problem or concern for any reason, we can skip this activity. All of the information you provide on the questionnaires is confidential, so you don't have to discuss the topic if you don't want to. Is it OK to continue with the activity? [*If yes, continue... If not, skip to the next activity.*]

Here's your topic. Would you be OK with discussing this topic?

[*If yes, continue... If not, skip to the next activity.*]

Okay, great. Remember to:

Object touch: hold on to the weights during the activity to make sure you use one hand. Also, please do not touch one another during the discussion.

Touch condition: hold hands during the activity to make sure you use one hand.

Please discuss this topic until I return with some more questionnaires to complete.

Conflict Codebook

Last revised 9/30/2015

This coding manual includes definitions for various dimensions to be rated for both members of the couple during a disagreement discussion. In a laboratory session, the couple was asked to discuss a topic that they rated as the most severe area of disagreement in their relationship (based off earlier questionnaire responses). They were asked to discuss the topic until the experimenter returned with another activity. Each discussion lasted approximately 6 minutes long.

Each coder will be assigned to code only one member of each dyad. This is to ensure that coders' ratings for one dyad member are not biased by ratings made for the other dyad member. It is important to be objective and unbiased when making the ratings. As a coder, you must code exactly what you see happening without trying to interpret the behaviors of the individuals you are coding (and without making allowances for someone you're coding based on what you assume must be going on in their lives or in their relationship). Coders who know the either partner in a video (e.g., as friends or neighbors) or have prior knowledge of them (e.g., research assistants who ran the laboratory session as an experimenter for the particular couple in the video) should not code that particular dyad. Again, it is important that ratings be objective and unbiased.

Very carefully use the definitions provided below when making your ratings. You should carefully study the manual so that you are very familiar with the definitions before you begin coding--- but then constantly refer back to the manual as you make your ratings. You want to be sure to code all behaviors that fit into a definition, so you will need to refer back to the manual often as a reminder of what fits each code.

The videos for this interaction can be found under the network drive, in a folder entitled 'Handedness Study Coding'. Each couple who participated in this study have their own folder which includes three videos. You will **only watch the conflict videos** for each couple you are assigned. Watching any of the couple's other interactions may bias your ratings of behaviors that occur in their conflict discussion.

THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS WILL BE CODED FOR EACH COUPLE-MEMBER:

1. Anxiety/Distress
2. Positive Affect Toward Partner
3. Verbal Affection Toward Partner
4. Physical Affection Toward partner
5. Emotional Support/Validation
6. Positive Problem-Solving/Cooperation
7. Accept Responsibility
8. Denial
9. Negative Affect/Hostility
10. Criticism
11. Defensiveness
12. Contempt
13. Stonewalling
14. Positive Distraction/ Avoidance of Conflict

THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS WILL BE CODED FOR EACH COUPLE, AS A WHOLE:

15. Negative Escalation

NOTES TO CODERS

1. You'll need to watch each interaction at least twice – focusing on the individual you are responsible for coding. You will most likely need to watch each interaction more than that if you feel like you missed something, but twice is the minimum amount of time that you'll need to watch each interaction. It's helpful to sit back and watch the entire interaction once before taking notes and focusing on a particular member of the dyad – just to get a general sense of the interaction quality and couple dynamics. [You'll find that you pick up on more information the more you watch each dyad.].
2. **It is essential to take notes while you're watching the tape. Please take notes on the note sheets that are provided. Feel free to also write notes on your code sheet if you feel that will be helpful. Taking notes will help you to remember things that happened during the interaction when you are making your ratings later. After making your ratings, be sure to attach your note sheets to the code sheets. To be sure that you don't miss anything that occurs during the interaction while you're taking notes, you should pause the tape periodically and take notes about what you just saw without the tape running. If you leave the tape running while writing your notes, you will surely miss something. In practice, you will need to stop the tape as frequently as you need to ensure that you catch all behaviors – even subtle nonverbal ones. For interactions in which there is a lot happening, you may need to stop the tape every 15 to 30 seconds. For interactions in which there is not much happening, it may be appropriate to stop the tape every 1 to 2 minutes. Just be sure to take careful and thorough notes so that you can use them to make your ratings afterwards.
3. Remember to use the whole scale when making your ratings. It is important to reserve the extreme values for the most extreme displays of each dimension you're coding, but at the same time it is important to identify the types of extreme behaviors that are likely to occur in this particular type of situation. We need to distinguish the people who do a great deal of the behaviors you're coding (in this type of situation) from those who do only a little (in this type of situation). Because these are short interactions in a public setting, we may be making somewhat subtle distinctions. We will watch several of the tapes together before you begin rating any of them to give you a sense of the degree to which the behaviors you are coding are likely to occur in the particular context. This will help you to determine which types of behaviors should get extreme ratings on a given dimension.
4. Please write your initials and dyad number on each rating sheet you complete, and make sure to choose the appropriate rating sheet (female/right or male/left) when completing your coding assignments.
5. Please think of the scale numbers in terms of both (a) the frequency of occurrence throughout the interaction of the particular type of behavior described and (b) the quality (or intensity) of the behaviors displayed that fit each category. Ratings encompass both the quality and quantity (or amount) of behaviors displayed. However, please note that negative behaviors (e.g., hostile affect, avoidance, discouragement) are

not expected to be of high quality, but they should be rated according to their intensity and frequency of occurrence. Scale numbers are defined as follows:

1 = Not at All

None of that type of behavior occurs at any time throughout the course of the interaction.

2 = Rare or Low Quality

The individual rarely manifests behaviors that fit the category of behaviors described or the individual exhibits behaviors that indicate a low/minimal level of the type of behavior. That is, the type of behavior occurs rarely during the course of the interaction (i.e., only 1 or 2 instances of the behavior described) or the behavior exhibited is of only a low/minimal quality for the positive behavior scales.

Please note that if an individual exhibits more than 2 instances of the type of behavior described, but this behavior is only of low/minimal quality, then the individual would receive this low rating. Also, please note that even if only one very brief instance of the type of behavior described occurs during the course of the interaction, this rating should be given.

3 = Occasional or Moderate Quality

The individual manifests behaviors that indicate a moderate level of the type of behavior described. That is, the type of behavior described occurs occasionally during the course of the interaction (i.e., more than 2 instances of the type of behavior described, but not as much as would be expected for a higher rating) or the behavior exhibited is of only a moderate quality for the positive behavior scales.

Please note that if an individual exhibits a great deal of the type of behavior described, but this behavior is of moderate quality (e.g., several pieces of advice given throughout the interaction in a brief, cursory manner without depth or elaboration or apparent interest), then the individual would receive this moderate rating.

4 = Often and High Quality

The individual often manifests behaviors that indicate a high level of the type of behavior described. That is, the type of behavior described occurs often during the course of the interaction (i.e., more than occasionally, but not consistently throughout the interaction) and of a high quality (although not necessarily the highest possible quality) for the positive behaviors.

5 = Consistent and Highest Quality

The individual consistently manifests behaviors that indicate the highest level of the type of behavior described. That is, the type of behavior described not only occurs consistently throughout the interaction such that the individual exhibits the most amount of that type of behavior that could be expected to occur in this type of interaction, but for the positive behaviors the individual exhibits the behavior at the highest possible quality.

CODING DEFINITIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. Anxiety/Distress

This is a rating of the extent to which the individual exhibited or expressed any type of anxiety or distress during the discussion. Nonverbal indications of anxiety/distress might include (but are not limited to) nervous fidgeting/tapping, biting of nails, nervous facial expressions, and any behaviors indicating that one feels stressed or worried (e.g., fearful facial expressions). Excessive talking and nervous laughter should also be coded as anxiety. Verbal indications of anxiety/distress include statements such as (but are not limited to) the following: "I'm so stressed out, nervous, frustrated, overwhelmed, upset." Crying also counts as distress.

2. Positive Affect toward Partner

This category includes expressions of positive affect specifically toward the partner such as laughing with the partner, smiling at him/her, or an enthusiastic voice tone directed toward the partner.

3. Verbal Affection Towards Partner

This code includes verbal displays of affection toward the partner, such as making affectionate statements like "I love you", or "I like you". A statement that is complimenting the partner also counts.

4. Physical Affection Towards Partner

This code involves providing an affectionate touch to one's partner, like putting their head on the partner's shoulder, or giving a kiss, hugs.

5. Emotional Support/Validation

Support/Validation focuses on positive listening skills and speaking skills that demonstrate support and understanding to the partner. Close synonyms for this code are encouragement, acknowledgement, and acceptance. Examples of support/validation cues include partner being attentive while listening and responding to what is being said both verbally and facially (head nods, smiles, eyebrow movements). More examples include expressing warmth, concern, and sympathy toward partner, accepting partner's statements, summarizing or paraphrasing partner's statements, encouraging partner, and flattering, complimenting partner. If the partner is giving qualifying statements, such as "I understand, but..." they should get a lower quality rating.

6. Positive Problem-Solving/Cooperation

This code involves describing/defining the problem positively or neutrally without resorting to blaming partner, clearly expressing wishes and desired outcome to be reached, contributing to problem discussion effectively and keeping the conversation on task, **proposing positive plans or a solution designed to solve the problem, negotiating, compromising, and/or working with his or her partner to come to a mutually agreeable conclusion, making a commitment to take action towards the problem, suggesting a hypothetical plan(s) to solve the problem.** Staying on task, and listening carefully should not earn a higher score than 2. The partner needs to be an active effort to solve the problem or make a compromise in order to score higher than a 2.

7. Accept Responsibility

Accepting responsibility is coded when a person explicitly accepts the responsibility for a past or present problem or behavior that has been previously defined within the negotiation. Simply agreeing that an event took place is not enough to get credit; there must be elaboration. A statement in which a person admits that s/he is responsible for the behavior may receive credit as can a statement in which one person suggests that both partners are responsible for the problem. Apologetic statements are coded as accepting responsibility. Qualifying an acceptance of responsibility with a "but..." statement implies incomplete acceptance of

responsibility, and thus does not receive credit. Accepting responsibility for the problem and how it is being dealt with can also receive credit.

8. Denial

Denial is the active rejection of a problem's existence or of personal responsibility for the problem being discussed. Denial can be characterized as disputing the existence of or minimizing the problem being discussed, making excuses for his or her role in the problem area, blaming partner for blowing the problem out of proportion, claiming partner is imagining or making up the problem.

9. Negative Affect/Hostility

Negative affect involving anger and hostility can be characterized by the following behaviors: nonverbal responses that communicate hostility, displeasure, disapproval, or disagreement accompanied by negative affect (usually in response to something partner has just said); negative voice tone (can accompany negative or non-negative statements); criticizing (disliking or disapproving of partner's behavior); disagreeing (disagreements said with negative affect that do not further the discussion). This code may also include disgust, contempt, and domineering. This is more general.

10. Criticism

Criticism is the act of attacking your partner's personality or character, usually with the intent of making someone right and someone wrong. Phrases such as "you never...", "you're the type of person who...", or "why are you so..." all exemplify criticism. Criticism is when one person complains about a problem in the relationship as if to suggest his/her partner has a defective personality.

11. Defensiveness

Defensiveness is the act of warding off a perceived attack by one's partner. Defensiveness can entail making excuses (e.g. blaming the issue on external circumstances beyond your control), cross-complaining (meeting partner's complaint with a counter-complaint about partner), disagreeing and then cross-complaining (denying responsibility, and providing a counter-complaint about partner), yes-butting (start off by agreeing, but end up disagreeing). Defensiveness also involves people seeing and portraying themselves as innocent victims.

12. Contempt

Contempt is when one partner attacks their partner's sense of self with the intention to insult or psychologically abuse him/her. Insults, name-calling, hostile humor, sarcasm, mockery, sneering, and eye rolling all fall into this code.

13. Stonewalling

Stonewalling is the act of withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict. Stonewalling conveys disapproval, icy distance, separation, disconnection, and/or smugness. Examples of stonewalling include stony silence, monosyllabic mutterings, changing the subject, removing oneself physically, and silent treatment. As opposed to withdrawing, stonewalling involves not revisiting the conflict topic. The partner shuts down the

discussion and refuses to address the conflict topic whatsoever. Stonewalling is a more specific and extreme form of withdrawing. If the couple member exhibits signs of stonewalling, they should receive a 5 for withdraw.

14. Positive Distraction/Avoidance of Conflict

Positive distraction/ Avoidance of conflict involves providing a positive distraction from the conflict topic. Positive distractions can include bringing up another topic for discussion or avoiding discussing the assigned conflict at all.

CODING DEFINITIONS FOR DYADS

15. Negative Escalation

The negative escalation dimension is defined as a sequential pattern in which a negative behavior of one partner is followed by a negative behavior of the spouse and so forth, creating a snowball effect. This measure rates how often negative behaviors of one partner are responded to with negative behaviors from the other partner. Consecutive negative chains of behaviors are the essential ingredients that must be observed. This means that unrelated negative behaviors in an interaction do not constitute a snowball or spiraling effect; such an interaction must be rated low on the negative escalation dimension, even though one or both partners may receive moderate or high scores on the negative affect dimension. To be rated very high on negative escalation both partners would not only display a high frequency of negative verbal and non-verbal behaviors, but also give the impression of triggering each other's negative behaviors.

Special Comments About Interaction

Please list any special comments about the dyad that may be helpful to us in understanding their interaction. For example, one person may have been sick with a cold or may have had an unusual event happen that day that appears to have affected the nature of the task, one or both members of the couple may have been under time constraints so they were attempting to rush through the experiment, etc. When commenting about the dyad, please be specific about which person you're describing (i.e., the boyfriend or girlfriend). In addition, please list any problems with the tape (e.g., could not hear the couple, the camera was not focused on the dyad correctly, couldn't see a couple member's face), and please indicate if one or both members of the dyad could not be understood because of a strong accent, a different language, etc.). Please list anything about the interaction that you feel may be important to note.

RATER INITIALS: _____

MALE PARTNER RATINGS

DYAD ID: _____

(or in same sex, partner on left)

1. **ANXIETY/DISTRESS**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

2. **POSITIVE AFFECT TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

3. **VERBAL AFFECTION TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

4. **PHYSICAL AFFECTION TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

5. **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT/VALIDATION**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

6. **POSITIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING/COOPERATION**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

7. **ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

8. **DENIAL**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

9. **NEGATIVE AFFECT/HOSTILITY**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

10. **CRITICISM**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

11. **DEFENSIVENESS**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

12. **CONTEMPT**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

13. **STONEWALLING**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

14. **AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

15. **NEGATIVE ESCALATION**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare Or Low Quality	Occasional or Moderate Quality	Often or High Quality	Consistent or Highest Quality

RATER INITIALS: _____

FEMALE PARTNER RATINGS

DYAD ID: _____

(or in same sex, partner on right)

1. **ANXIETY/DISTRESS**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

2. **POSITIVE AFFECT TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

3. **VERBAL AFFECTION TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

4. **PHYSICAL AFFECTION TOWARD PARTNER**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

5. **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT/VALIDATION**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

6. **POSITIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING/COOPERATION**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

7. **ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

8. **DENIAL**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

9. **NEGATIVE AFFECT/HOSTILITY**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

10. **CRITICISM**

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

11.

DEFENSIVENESS

1-----2-----3-----4-----5				
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

12.

CONTEMPT

1-----2-----3-----4-----5				
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

13.

STONEWALLING

1-----2-----3-----4-----5				
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

14.

AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT

1-----2-----3-----4-----5				
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

15.

NEGATIVE ESCALATION

1-----2-----3-----4-----5				
Not At All	Rare	Occasional	Often	Consistent
	Or Low	or Moderate	or High	or Highest
	Quality	Quality	Quality	Quality

EXPERIMENT 2A

Manipulation Instructions:

All participants:

For this activity, we are going to have you imagine that you were spending time with your romantic partner at home.

Please type the **first** name of your romantic partner in the space below. (Do NOT provide your partner's last name!)

What is your romantic partner's gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Touch Condition (male partner version):

(Part 1: Discuss day)

Now imagine that you are sitting near [PARTNER'S NAME] on the sofa at home.

Please describe the type of sofa you are visualizing.

Imagine that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are talking casually about your day as you sit next to one another on the sofa. Imagine that as you are talking, he touches you on the arm, strokes your arm gently, and puts his arm around you. His touch is natural within the conversation.

Please describe what it feels like on your arm as [PARTNER'S NAME] touches you. What does his hand feel like? Is his hand warm or cold? Where exactly on your arm is he touching you?

As you continue sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME], he continues to touch you in a comfortable way as you two are talking casually.

Describe at least 3 other ways that you can imagine that [PARTNER'S NAME] might touch you in a comfortable way. Please include some details about each in the 3 blocks below.

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME]. Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME] as you have a casual conversation about your day. Think about **how it would feel** to be touched by him. Think about how it would make you feel about him and about your relationship with him.

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear.

The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.

The timer will tell you how much time is left. Only open your eyes to periodically to check how much time is left.



Visualize now.

(Timer counts down from 60 seconds)

(Part 2: Discuss conflict)

Please take a moment to think about a **current disagreement or conflict** in your relationship with [PARTNER'S NAME]. For example, it could be something that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are having trouble agreeing on, a behavior you want [PARTNER'S NAME] to change, or a behavior that [PARTNER'S NAME] wants you to change.

In a few words, please briefly describe the disagreement or conflict.

Please select the category below that best describes the conflict you described above. If your conflict does not fit into any of these categories, select "other."

(Part 3: Partner's negative response)

Imagine that as you are sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME], you begin to discuss this disagreement together. As you discuss the disagreement, [PARTNER'S NAME] touches you continually in the same affectionate way as before.

As you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME], he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please read this sentence out loud to yourself so that you can imagine what it would feel like if your partner said this to you while you were discussing your conflict.

Please describe in a few words how it would feel to have this interaction.

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME]. Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear. The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.



Visualize now.

(Timer counts down from 60 seconds)

Control Condition (male partner version):

(Part 1: Discuss day)

Now imagine that you are sitting near [PARTNER'S NAME] on the sofa at home. There is a small space between you and him on the sofa.

Please describe the type of sofa you are visualizing.

Imagine that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are talking casually about your day as you sit next to one another on the sofa. Imagine that as you are talking, you are also paying attention to details of the room in which you are talking.

Please describe the type of room you are visualizing. What is the shape of the room? Is it hot or cold? Is there carpet or some other flooring?

As you continue sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME], you notice more details of the room as you two are talking casually.

Describe at least 3 types of decorations or furniture that are in the room you are visualizing. Please include some details about each in the 3 blocks below.

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing the room in which you could have a conversation with [PARTNER'S NAME] . Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine all of the details of the room and how you are sitting. Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to sit in this room as you have a casual conversation about your day.

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear.

The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.

The timer will tell you how much time is left. Only open your eyes to periodically to check how much time is left.



Visualize now.

(Timer counts down from 60 seconds)

(Part 2: Discuss conflict)

Please take a moment to think about a **current disagreement or conflict** in your relationship with [PARTNER'S NAME]. For example, it could be something that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are having trouble agreeing on, a behavior you want [PARTNER'S NAME] to change, or a behavior that [PARTNER'S NAME] wants you to change.

In a few words, please briefly describe the disagreement or conflict.

Please select the category below that best describes the conflict you described above. If your conflict does not fit into any of these categories, select "other."

(Part 3: Partner's negative response)

Imagine that as you are sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME], you begin to discuss this disagreement together. As you discuss the disagreement, you notice details of the room in the same way as before.

As you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME], he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please read this sentence out loud to yourself so that you can imagine what it would feel like if your partner said this to you while you were discussing your conflict.

Please describe in a few words how it would feel to have this interaction.

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME]. Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear. The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.



Visualize now.

(Timer counts down from 60 seconds).

Imagining that the conversation you visualized really took place, how would you be feeling **right in that moment**?

I would be feeling...

State security = yellow
Stress = green

[illegible]

Cognitive interdependence

Imagining that the conversation you visualized really took place, think about how you would be feeling **in that moment** to evaluate the following statements.

[illegible]

Experiment 2b

All participants: Provide partner's first name and gender, same as Experiment 2a

Touch condition:

Part 1: Discuss day
(same as Experiment 2a)

Part 2: Discuss conflict

Please take a moment to think about a **current disagreement or conflict** in your relationship with [PARTNER'S NAME]. For example, it could be something that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are having trouble agreeing on, a behavior you want [PARTNER'S NAME] to change, or a behavior that [PARTNER'S NAME] wants you to change.

In a few words, please briefly describe the disagreement or conflict.

Please select the category below that best describes the conflict you described above. If your conflict does not fit into any of these categories, select "other."

Imagine that as you are sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME] and he is touching you in a warm, affectionate way like before, **you decide to bring up the topic of your conflict.**

In the space below, please describe exactly how you would bring up this conversation to [PARTNER'S NAME]. Write exactly what you would say. (Please write at least a few sentences).

I would say to [PARTNER'S NAME]:

Conflict disclosure

Part 3: Partner's negative response

Imagine that as you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME] and he continues to touch you affectionately, he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please read this sentence out loud to yourself so that you can imagine what it would feel like if your partner said this to you while you were discussing your conflict.

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME]. Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear. The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.



Visualize now.

As you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME] and he continues to touch you affectionately, he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

I would be feeling...

Stress = green

[illegible]

Cognitive interdependence

Imagining that this interaction really took place, think about how you would be feeling **in that moment** to evaluate the following statements:

[illegible]

Remember, as you discussed your conflict and [PARTNER'S NAME] continued to touch you affectionately, he interrupted you and said:

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please write your response to [PARTNER'S NAME] in the box below. Please write at least a few sentences.

I would say:

Conflict response

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response. It occupies the lower half of the 'Conflict response' section.

Control condition:

Part 1: Discuss day
(same as Experiment 2a)

Part 2: Discuss conflict

Please take a moment to think about a **current disagreement or conflict** in your relationship with [PARTNER'S NAME]. For example, it could be something that you and [PARTNER'S NAME] are having trouble agreeing on, a behavior you want [PARTNER'S NAME] to change, or a behavior that [PARTNER'S NAME] wants you to change.

In a few words, please briefly describe the disagreement or conflict.

Please select the category below that best describes the conflict you described above. If your conflict does not fit into any of these categories, select "other."

Imagine that as you are sitting with [PARTNER'S NAME] and you notice details of the room like before, **you decide to bring up the topic of your conflict**.

In the space below, please describe exactly how you would bring up this conversation to [PARTNER'S NAME]. Write exactly what you would say. (Please write at least a few sentences).

I would say to [PARTNER'S NAME]:

Conflict disclosure

Part 3: Partner's negative response

Imagine that as you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME] and continue to notice details of the room, he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please read this sentence out loud to yourself so that you can imagine what it would feel like if your partner said this to you while you were discussing your conflict.

On the next page, you will spend one minute visualizing this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME]. Please close your eyes while you visualize.

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

When you are ready to begin visualizing, click next and the timer will appear. The next page will be timed and will advance automatically after you have visualized for one minute.



Visualize now.

As you explain your perspective to [PARTNER'S NAME] and continue to notice details of the room, he interrupts you and says...

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Imagine exactly **how it would feel** to have this interaction with [PARTNER'S NAME].

I would be feeling...

Same as above - measuring state security and stress, cognitive interdependence

[illegible]

Imagining that this interaction really took place, think about how you would be feeling **in that moment** to evaluate the following statements:

[illegible]

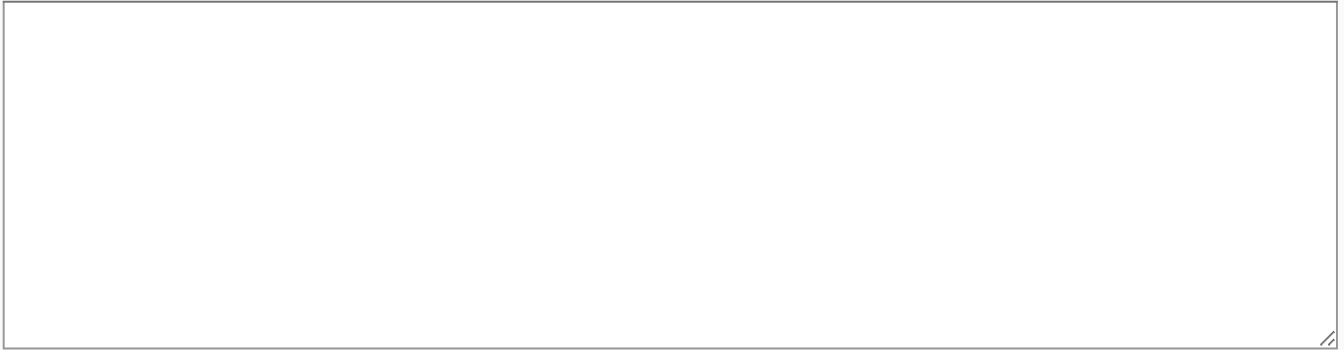
Remember, as you discussed your conflict and you continued to notice details of the room, [PARTNER'S NAME] interrupted you and said:

"Yeah, I hear you. But I still don't really know what you want from me. I'm really frustrated, and I'm not sure how to resolve this."

Please write your response to [PARTNER'S NAME] in the box below. Please write at least a few sentences.

I would say:

Conflict response



Conflict Codebook for Written Responses (MTurk Studies)

Last revised 6/26/2017

This coding manual includes definitions for various dimensions to be rated for participants. Participants were asked to disclose a conflict to their partner by writing what they would say to their partner, and then they were asked to respond after their partner said something ambiguous/negative.

It is important to be objective and unbiased when making the ratings. As a coder, you must code exactly what is written without trying to over-interpret (and without making allowances for someone you're coding based on what you assume must be going on in their lives or in their relationship).

Very carefully use the definitions provided below when making your ratings. You should carefully study the manual so that you are very familiar with the definitions before you begin coding--- but then constantly refer back to the manual as you make your ratings

NOTES TO CODERS

1. Be sure to read each written response at least twice. It's helpful to read the entire response once before going through and coding for specific behaviors.
2. Please underline any part of the response that contains our positive behaviors, and please **bold** any part of the response that contains our negative behavior. In addition, put a number (in parentheses) next to any part that you are categorizing as one of the possible codes. This will help us when we are going over discrepancies eventually.
3. Remember to use the whole scale when making your ratings. It is important to reserve the extreme values for the most extreme displays of each dimension you're coding, but at the same time it is important to identify the types of extreme behaviors that are likely to occur in this particular type of situation. We need to distinguish the people who do a great deal of the behaviors you're coding (in this type of situation) from those who do only a little (in this type of situation). We are making somewhat subtle distinctions, but try your best.
4. Be sure to read the responses in a neutral voice tone, and do not over-interpret what is written.
5. I am providing you with three columns of information.

IDNumber	Disclose_conflict	Response_conflict
<i>This is the participants' ID Number. I will use this to assign codes.</i>	<i>Code this section and put your codes on the first tab in your coding files.</i>	<i>Code this section and put your codes on the second tab in your coding file.</i>

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CODES

Write the number in parentheses next to the evidence.

1 = Not at All

None of that type of behavior occurs at any time throughout written response.

2 = Moderate frequency/quality

The behavior occurs relatively infrequently or with lower quality.

3 = High frequency/quality

The behavior occurs relatively frequently or with higher quality.

1. Verbal Affection Towards Partner

This code includes affectionate statements like “I love you”, or “I like you”. A statement that is complimenting the partner also counts. Using pet names like “honey” or “babe” also shows verbal affection.

2. Emotional Support/Validation

Support/Validation focuses on positive listening skills and speaking skills that demonstrate support and understanding to the partner. Close synonyms for this code are encouragement, acknowledgement, and acceptance. Examples of support/validation cues include expressing warmth, concern, and sympathy toward partner, encouraging partner, and demonstrating understanding. Written examples include “I understand that it’s tough,” “I can understand that you’re upset.” If the partner is giving qualifying statements, such as “I understand, but...” they should get a lower quality rating.

3. Cooperation/Problem-solving

This code involves proposing positive plans or a solution designed to solve the problem, negotiating, compromising, and/or working with his or her partner to come to a mutually agreeable conclusion, making a commitment to take action towards the problem, suggesting a hypothetical plan(s) to solve the problem. Examples include “Perhaps we could...” and describing steps each person could take to resolve the problem. This can include asking partner to change behavior. Note: This code does not include demanding statements.

4. Accept Responsibility

Accepting responsibility is coded when a person explicitly accepts the responsibility for a past or present problem or behavior. Apologetic statements are coded as accepting responsibility. Qualifying an acceptance of responsibility with a “but...” statement implies incomplete acceptance of responsibility, and thus does not receive credit. Accepting responsibility for the problem and how it is being dealt with can also receive credit. Examples include “I’m sorry that I...” and “I see your point about how I...”

5. Soft start-up

Soft start-up is a behavior at the beginning of the writing that softens the discussion. Focus on the first part of the response for this code. This includes describing the wish not to upset the partner or acknowledging that it is hard to have the conversation. Examples include “I hope you don’t get upset, but I want to talk about...” and “This is hard for me to bring up and I hope you can understand.”

NEGATIVE BEHAVIORAL CODES

Write the number in parentheses next to the evidence.

1 = Not at All

None of that type of behavior occurs at any time throughout written response.

2 = Moderate frequency/quality

The behavior occurs relatively infrequently or with lower quality.

3 = High frequency/quality

The behavior occurs relatively frequently or with higher quality.

6. Negative Affect/Hostility

This code assesses negative affect involving anger and hostility. It includes any written response that shows anger (high quality) or frustration (low quality). Cursing, complaining, and saying something aggressively count toward this code. Examples include “You know damn well how to solve this conflict” and “I don’t know what’s with you lately.”

7. Criticism

Criticism is the act of attacking your partner’s personality or character, usually with the intent of making someone right and someone wrong. Phrases such as “you never...”, “you’re the type of person who...”, or “why are you so...” all exemplify criticism. Criticism is when one person complains about a problem in the relationship as if to suggest his/her partner has a defective personality.

8. Defensiveness

Defensiveness is the act of warding off a perceived attack by one’s partner. Defensiveness can entail making excuses (e.g. blaming the issue on external circumstances), cross-complaining (meeting partner’s complaint with a counter-complaint about partner), and yes-butting (start off by agreeing, but end up disagreeing).

9. Denial

Denial is the active rejection of a problem’s existence. Denial can be characterized as disputing the existence of or minimizing the problem being discussed, blaming partner for blowing the problem out of proportion, or claiming partner is imagining or making up the problem. Do not code comments to the experimenter – only code responses that are actually directed toward the partner.

10. Contempt

Contempt is when one partner attacks their partner’s sense of self with the intention to insult or psychologically abuse him/her. Insults, name-calling, hostile humor, sarcasm, and mockery fall into this code.

11. Stonewalling

Stonewalling is the act of withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict. Stonewalling conveys disapproval, icy distance, separation, disconnection, and/or smugness. Examples of stonewalling include stony silence, monosyllabic mutterings, changing the subject, removing oneself physically, and silent treatment. In these responses, stonewalling would be clear in response such as “I would not respond – I would walk away.”

1-5 CODES

1 = Not at All

None of that type of behavior occurs at any time throughout written response.

2 = Rare or Low Quality

The individual rarely manifests behaviors that fit the category of behaviors described or the individual exhibits behaviors that indicate a low/minimal level of the type of behavior. Reserve this code for situations where the behavior occurred but it is as minimal as possible without not occurring at all.

3 = Occasional or Moderate Quality

The individual manifests behaviors that indicate a moderate level of the type of behavior described.

4 = Often and High Quality

The response demonstrates the behavior often and/or with high quality. For example, this may mean that the individual demonstrates cooperative behavior throughout their response (but not the highest quality), or it might mean that the individual demonstrated a bit of cooperative behavior and a bit of emotional support so that the overall quality is high.

5 = Consistent and Highest Quality

The individual consistently manifests behaviors that indicate the highest level of the type of behavior described. Again, this could mean that one code is dominant and high quality throughout or that the individual has many behaviors that fit into the coded category that sum to consistent and highest quality.

OVERALL POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Constructive Behavior

***Underline evidence for this code**

This code indicates the extent to which the participant engaged in positive behavior(s) (1-5 above). You can give high scores if participants do a great deal/high quality of one positive behavior or if they do some of several positive behaviors. However, to earn a 5, participants should have done some problem solving/cooperation or accepting responsibility. Verbal affection, emotional support, and soft-start up alone should not earn a 5, although they can earn a high score.

OVERALL NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

Destructive behavior

***Bold evidence for this code**

This code indicates the extent to which the participant engaged in negative behavior(s) (6-11 above). You can give high scores if participants do a great deal/high quality of one negative behavior or if they do some of several negative behaviors.