

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: ATTACHMENT AND DEMAND/WITHDRAW BEHAVIOR IN
COUPLE INTERACTIONS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF
CONFLICT LEVEL

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This study examined the relations between clinical couples' secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful avoidant attachment styles and their constructive, demanding, and withdrawing dyadic conflict resolution communication behavior. It also tested whether overall level of relationship conflict moderated the relation between attachment style and communication. The study was a secondary analysis of preexisting data, using a sample of 72 couples who completed assessments at the Center for Healthy Families at the University of Maryland, College Park. The subset of assessment material used for this study included the Relationship Questionnaire, Dyadic Adjustment Scale and Communication Patterns Questionnaire. Results indicated that attachment style was related to types of conflict communication behavior. Also, couples reporting low levels of conflict used more mutual constructive communication than those reporting high levels of conflict. Implications of the study's findings for therapeutic work with couples and suggestions for future research are discussed.

ATTACHMENT AND DEMAND/WITHDRAW BEHAVIOR IN COUPLE
INTERACTIONS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF
CONFLICT LEVEL

By

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
2008

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Acknowledgements

I am more than pleased to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following people for their support, guidance, motivation, and care throughout my journey during the last two years and in writing this thesis.

Norm – I want to thank you so much for your incredible patience and willingness to work with me on this massive project. I am truly honored to have had the opportunity to work with you and experience first hand your vast knowledge of the subject area. You have truly inspired me and motivated me every step of the way.

Carol and Leigh – Your insight and advice provided a new way for me to conceptualize this project and I appreciate your guidance and efforts during the last year. You both made this experience enjoyable and I thank you for that.

The 2006 Marriage and Family Therapy Class – Jocelyn, Nicole, Joanna, Hannah, Reena, Annie, Kirk, Amanda, and Katie – you have all provided such tremendous support during the toughest of times. You all have motivated me with your advice and compassion and I am grateful for the time that we have had together. I will truly miss every minute of the last two years.

To my mom, dad, and Mike – Your understanding and love has given me the strength to push through the last two years. You all have always inspired me and have pushed me to strive to be the best I can be. I only hope that I can be the rock for each of you that you have been for me. Thank you.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose.....	6
Review of Literature	7
Attachment Theory	7
Communication in Distressed Couples.....	14
Demand/Withdraw Couple Interaction Pattern.....	15
Impact on Relationships of Overall Level of Conflict.....	20
Attachment and the Demand/Withdraw Pattern	22
Gender and Cultural Differences in Attachment	28
Gender and Cultural Differences in Conflict Communication Behavior.....	30
Hypotheses.....	31
Chapter II: Methodology.....	34
Sample.....	34
Definitions of Variables	35
Independent Variable	35
Moderator Variable.....	36
Dependent Variables	36
Measures	36
Relationship Questionnaire (RQ).....	37
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	38
Communications Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ)	38
Procedure	40
Intake Interview	40
Assessment.....	41
Chapter III: Results	43
Overview of Analyses.....	43
Results of Exploratory Analyses.....	44
Gender and Racial Differences in Communication	44
Frequencies of Attachment Style by Gender for Exploratory Analyses.....	44
Degrees of Attachment Style by Race and Gender.....	45
Gender Differences in Communication	45
Degrees of Attachment Style by Gender	46

Tests of the Hypotheses	46
Frequencies of Attachment Style by Gender	46
Hypothesis One	46
Hypothesis Two	49
Hypothesis Three	51
Hypothesis Four	53
Hypothesis Five	55
Chapter IV: Discussion	59
Overview of the Findings.....	59
Limitations of the Study.....	66
Implications.....	68
Implications for Future Research.....	68
Implications for Clinicians.....	69
Appendix A: RQ	72
Appendix B: DAS	73
Appendix C: CPQ	77
References	79

List of Tables

Table 1. Attachment Styles in Terms of Working Models of Self and Others.....	9
Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the 287 Clinic Couples.....	34
Table 3: Summary Table of Variables and Instruments	40
Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	47
Table 5: Cell Means for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	47
Table 6: Analysis of Variance for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict	48
Table 7: Cell Means for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	48
Table 8: Analysis of Variance for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	49
Table 9: Cell Means for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	50
Table 10: Analysis of Variance for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict	51
Table 11: Cell Means for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	51
Table 12: Analysis of Variance for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	52
Table 13: Cell Means for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	52
Table 14: Analysis of Variance for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict	53
Table 15: Cell Means for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict.....	53

List of Figures

Figure 1. Illustration of the cycle that occurs when partners engage in demanding and withdrawing behavior.	17
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ATTACHMENT AND DEMAND/WITHDRAW BEHAVIOR IN COUPLE
INTERACTIONS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF CONFLICT LEVEL

Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Research has focused a great deal on the detrimental effects of negative communication on marital relationships. A negative communication cycle that has drawn a substantial amount of attention in the past few years is the demand/withdraw pattern, in which one member of a couple pursues the other, seeking engagement, while the other member withdraws, attempting to reduce interaction. Couples engaging in this method of interaction have been described as attempting to stabilize the distance and/or power between them by taking polarized roles (Betchen & Ross, 2000). In heterosexual partnerships, this pattern is typically, but not solely, characterized by the female expressing negative affect and making complaints/demands during conflict and the male withdrawing from and avoiding the conflict or discussion. This interaction pattern has been found to be strongly associated with relationship dissatisfaction, relationship violence, and relationship dissolution (Shi, 2003). Past research in this area has sought to better understand the factors contributing to this interaction pattern, including biological differences between females and males and gender role socialization factors, as well as the consequences that the pattern has for the two individuals and their relationship.

One factor regarding the partners' dispositional characteristics that has not received much attention in research regarding specific communication patterns but provides a potential explanation for the demand/withdraw pattern is the partners' attachment styles. According to attachment theory, early experiences and interactions

with attachment figures lead a child to develop internal working models or concepts of self and others. Basically, when an infant is in distress a caregiver's response, whether consistent and present, inconsistent, or absent, influences the infant's view of its worthiness of receiving attention and also the trustworthiness of the attachment figures. These working models of self and others can be positive or negative. Individuals with a positive working model of self view themselves as secure, loveable, and high in self worth, whereas those with a negative self model view themselves as insecure, unlovable, and low in worth, and they often engage in communication with others that reflects their lack of confidence (Guerrero, 1996). Individuals with a positive working model of others find relationships rewarding and relational partners as supportive and receptive, whereas those with a negative mental model of others see relationships as unrewarding and individuals as untrustworthy and therefore engage in less relationship enhancing behaviors (Guerrero, 1996).

These mental working models are reinforced through repeated interaction with early attachment figures, become relatively stable, and have been found to be strongly associated with individuals' conflict resolution and social behaviors later in life in adult romantic relationships (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Thus, there is evidence that the attachment concepts developed in infancy lead to attachment orientations or styles that influence individuals' expectancies in romantic relationships. These expectancies are predictions that the individual makes about events that he or she believes are likely to occur in a relationship with a significant other; for example, the person's ability to trust and depend on others and one's fear of abandonment (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001). For example some individuals develop a secure attachment style in which they view

themselves as lovable, significant others as nurturing, and thus find it easy to approach others during times of stress. Some others develop a style in which they view others as relatively unreliable sources of nurturance and expect that they need to expend effort seeking physical proximity to caregivers during times of distress, whereas others learn to cope with insecurity regarding availability of caretakers either by actively withdrawing from close interaction with others when feeling insecure or by developing a style in which they dismiss the need for close connections with other people and limit their intimate interactions with others. As detailed below, attachment theorists and researchers have devised conceptual schemes for categorizing such attachment styles. Attachment theory posits that in adult relationships a person's relatively stable attachment system is activated during fear-provoking, challenging, and conflictual situations and elicits the individual's chronic pattern of coping with attachment needs through proximity-seeking or distancing. The way that individuals attempt to manage level of proximity with a significant other during these times can be seen in the form of communication that is used to meet their goal.

To study the influence of attachment on conflict management behavior, a great deal of research has utilized Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall's (1978) model which described three attachment styles: (1) secure (the individual views the attachment figure as a security base), (2) avoidant (the individual actively avoids attachment figures in times of distress because he or she views the attachment figure as unreliable), and (3) anxious/ambivalent (the individual has an inconsistent and conflicted relationship with the attachment figure, desiring contact but also fearing that the needed person may not be available) (Simpson et al., 1996). There are, however, some limitations to the use of this

forced choice, three component, adult attachment model, including the high number of themes that are addressed under each attachment style and its tendency to assume that each of the attachment styles is mutually exclusive of the others. To improve upon the assessment of attachment, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) created a four category model that is based on the theoretical assumption that attachment styles are defined by the two underlying dimensions of positive and negative models of self and others. Using this dichotomy creates four possible attachment styles: secure (positive model of self and others), preoccupied (negative model of self and positive model of others), dismissive (positive model of self and negative model of others), and fearful avoidant (negative model of self and others). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), also overcame Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) problem of having attachment styles appear mutually exclusive by proposing that an individual may have varying degrees of each style. Although their four category model of adult attachment has received significantly less attention to date in research on attachment in couples, some results are promising. Pistole and Arricale (2003) found support for the relationship between the four different attachment styles and couple communication behavior, in that preoccupied individuals were more likely to act in a hypervigilant and demanding manner during conflict, whereas people with the other two insecure styles were more likely to withdraw during conflict. As a result of the limited but promising findings, more research would be beneficial to test these associations further.

Many of the previously stated associations between attachment and the demand/withdraw pattern in couple interactions are inferences made from research examining attachment in relation to general conflict management behavior. However, a

study completed by Caughlin and Huston (2002) highlighted the importance of studying the demand/withdraw pattern as a construct separate from couples' general negativity and affectional expression. More specifically, their study showed that the demand/withdraw pattern accounts for variation in marital satisfaction that is empirically separable from general negative conflict behavior. Therefore, more research in this area is needed that focuses directly on relationships between attachment styles and demand/withdraw behavior during couples' conflictual interactions.

Finally, there is some evidence that the amount of overall conflict in a relationship moderates the association between attachment and conflict resolution behavior.

Researchers have found that exposure to major conflict makes individuals' attachment styles more salient and accessible, and therefore more likely to be activated during conflict with romantic partners (Simpson et al., 1996). When these attachment response styles are activated, they are likely to influence how an individual views his or her partner in the moment and what forms of behavior they exhibit for managing conflict with the partner. In a study completed by Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, and Kashy (2005), it was found that anxiously attached individuals perceived greater conflict with their partner and more escalation of conflict on a daily basis, leading them to have more negative views of the future of their relationship. However, partners' perceptions of the overall amount of conflict in their relationship has received little attention as a possible moderator variable between attachment styles and individuals' emotional and behavioral responses to their intimate partners.

Thus, there are some gaps in the research on attachment and couples' conflict communication. First, there is a need for more information about whether the attachment

styles within the four category model are associated with differences in couple communication (in particular the demand/withdraw pattern as well as constructive communication). Second, there is a need for research on whether the overall level of conflict in a couple's relationship moderates the relation attachment and partners' conflict management communication. The current study was designed to address these areas of research that have received limited attention in the field.

Purpose

Due to the significant relationship between the demand/withdraw pattern in couple conflict and relationship dissolution, research focusing on the determinants of this interaction pattern is essential. Finding a direct link between attachment style and the demand/withdraw pattern of communication would have significant clinical implications. More knowledge of the process associated with the negative demand/withdraw interaction pattern can lead to more targeted interventions in couple therapy. Therefore, based on previous research and the need for a more in-depth analysis of possible determinants of demand/withdraw behavior, the current study explored the relations among attachment styles, overall amount of conflict in a couple's relationship, and patterns of constructive communication and the demand/withdraw pattern of communication.

There were three major purposes to the present study. First, whereas previous studies have examined attachment using Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) three category conceptualization, the current study utilized the four-category model of attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The four category model divides attachment into secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful styles instead of the frequently used secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant styles. Second, this study focused on the

demand/withdraw pattern of communication in relation to attachment, which is more specific than past research that has examined attachment in relation to general conflict behavior. Finally, this study examined the overall amount of perceived conflict in the relationship as a moderator between attachment and both constructive and demand/withdraw communication. The findings can be helpful in understanding ways to both prevent and intervene with a communication pattern that has been demonstrated to have negative consequences for couples' relationships.

Review of Literature

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory provides a strong theoretical framework from which to study and understand interactions in intimate relationships. John Bowlby, the pioneering father of attachment, argued that attachment, a psychobiological system, develops in infancy with the function of maintaining proximity to a primary caregiver. A basic assumption of this theory is that due to the vulnerability of infants, they can only survive if an adult is willing to provide protection (Hazan & Shaver, 1994a). Bowlby (1973) believed that attachment systems are most readily activated in times of distress and/or threatening situations, as a survival tool. The primary caregiver thus acts as a "safe haven" for the infant and provides comfort and reassurance. However, separation from their "safe haven" and rocky reunions can cause attachment disruption.

According to Bowlby (1973), when infants are separated from their caregiver they go through three specific emotional stages: protest, despair, and detachment. In the protest stage, infants search actively for their primary caregiver, cry, and resist soothing from outside individuals. In the despair stage, infants experience a state of sadness and

passivity. Finally, in the detachment stage, infants are defensive and often avoid the primary caregiver if he or she does return. The quality of attachment that develops is related to the degree to which the caregiver can be relied on by the infant as a source of long term security when separation does occur. If a primary caregiver is consistent in returning and satisfying the infant's needs then the infant is most apt to develop a secure attachment style. If a caregiver is inconsistent and/or slow to respond to the infant's needs then the infant will most likely cry more than usual and develop an anxious attachment style characterized by anger. Finally, if a caregiver refuses an infant's needs, then the infant is likely to learn to avoid attempting to obtain physical proximity. Any of the aforementioned interactions with primary caregivers influence the development of an infant's internal working model or concept of self (how worthy they are of care and attention) and others (how reliable and responsive a caregiver is during times of need) (Bowlby, 1979; Jang, Smith, & Levine, 2002).

Ainsworth et al. (1978), based on the work of Bowlby, completed a laboratory research study that explored infants' responses to separation and reunion with their caregivers, and consequently described the three major patterns of attachment: secure, anxious/resistant, and avoidant. Attachment was manifested in each of the three styles differently during times of separation and distress. It was found that securely attached infants were welcoming of their caregivers after periods of separation and sought out closeness during times of distress. Anxious/resistant infants showed ambivalence and little sense of comfort upon their caregiver's return. And finally, avoidant infants sought separation from and participated in little interaction with their caregiver upon reunion.

A more recent look at attachment has looked more at the use of Bowlby’s internal working models of self and others to create four models of attachment. According to Guerrero (1996) these mental working models of self and others can be dichotomized into positive and negative. A positive self model is characterized by internalized feelings of self worth, self sufficiency, personal security, and lovability. A negative self model involves a view of the self as dependent, insecure, and unworthy. Regarding working models of others, a positive model of others involves beliefs that attachment figures are supportive, receptive, and accepting, and that relationships are valuable, rewarding, and worthwhile. Individuals with negative models of others view relationships as unrewarding and often actively avoid intimacy. When combined, these two working models of self and others, dichotomized into positive and negative, form four distinct attachment styles. These four styles are portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Attachment Styles in Terms of Working Models of Self and Others

		Model of Self	
		Positive	Negative
Model of Others	Positive	<i>Secure</i> (Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy)	<i>Preoccupied</i> (Preoccupied with relationships)
	Negative	<i>Dismissing</i> (Dismissing of intimacy, counter-dependent)	<i>Fearful</i> (Fearful of intimacy, socially avoidant)

Each style is characterized by distinct features:

The secure style. Secure individuals demonstrate high levels of self esteem and self worth, which makes them open to having open, satisfying, trusting, and present intimate relationships. They feel comfortable depending on others but have a good sense of autonomy as well. Their communication with significant others is characterized by

adaptability, flexibility, and general affability. Secure individuals are comfortable with open communication with their partners in a way that is beneficial for both members of the couple. Individuals who possess secure attachments are less likely to experience severe relationship problems than their counterparts (Bartholomew, 1990; Guerrero, 1996).

The preoccupied style. Similar to individuals with secure attachment, people with preoccupied attachment are likely to be highly affable, but tend to be less flexible in intimate relationships. This lack of flexibility is a result of low levels of self esteem. In order to boost their self esteem, individuals with preoccupied attachment seek out relationships and then become overly dependent on their partner to fulfill their needs for external approval. Those with preoccupied attachment styles therefore constantly seek out relationships and often feel unloved and unworthy when they are without one. When they do establish an intimate relationship, they become extremely clingy in an attempt to maintain the intimacy and not lose the security of the relationship. Therefore, communication is often characterized by a high level of involvement and over-eagerness in the individual's attempt to ensure that the connection is maintained (Bartholomew, 1990; Guerrero, 1996).

The fearful avoidant style. The fearful avoidant style is characterized by incompatible feelings and desires. The individual wants intimacy and validation from significant others but is very distrusting and has intense fears of rejection by partners. By being so distrusting, fearful avoidant individuals undermine their chances to form secure relationships, which would inevitably serve to reduce their fears regarding relationships. In regard to communication, they actively avoid social situations and conflictual

discussions to allay their anxieties and fears of rejection (Bartholomew, 1990; Guerrero, 1996).

The dismissive style. Individuals with a dismissive style are unlike all of their counterparts in that they neither desire nor fear close intimate relationships. Their model of self is overly self sufficient and independent, and they are unmotivated to seek out and maintain intimacy with others. In effect, their independence protects them from any negative feelings associated with forming intimate attachments. Thus, their communication behavior involves very low levels of self disclosure, and when possible, they avoid intimate situations (Bartholomew, 1990; Guerrero, 1996).

These four attachment styles, developed in infancy, are thought to be relatively flexible and malleable in the face of new experiences during early childhood, but through continued, repeated interactions with one or more primary caregivers the mental models strengthen and during adolescence become relatively resistant, but not impervious to change (Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). Thus, there is some belief that these early attachment systems continue in adult romantic relationships and guide an individual's expectations, perceptions, and behaviors in those relationships (Jang, Smith, & Levine, 2002). Some research has found support for this consistency over a six month period in infancy (Main & Weston, 1981; Waters, 1978), whereas other investigations (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990; Vaughn, Egeland, & Sroufe, 1979) have found discontinuity in attachment over time.

Unfortunately, there is limited knowledge about the stability of attachment across the lifespan (there have yet to be any long term stability studies conducted). However, in a retrospective study by Hazan and Hutt (1993), it was found that adult attachment styles

are products of both developmental history and current circumstances (Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). This means, for example, that if an adult developed a preoccupied attachment style in infancy and is currently in a relationship in which the partner is inconsistently available, then their attachment style is likely to be similar in adulthood. However, if that same individual were to enter a relationship with a partner who is consistently available and disconfirms their negative working model of others, then these current, repeated interactions are likely to invoke a slow shift to a more positive mental model of others. Hazan and Shaver (1994b) believe that a major misconception about attachment theory is its prediction of 100% stability from infancy to adulthood. They argue that although several studies have found stability of attachment in infancy, theory suggests that attachment does not become stable until adolescence, and thus those studies do not provide accurate estimates over that more extended period of time. They argue for the need for more long-term studies of attachment to determine its stability.

Initially, however, until adult romantic relationships influence working models one way or another, there is evidence that attachment styles are relatively stable. Thus, they can be used to explain how individuals develop and maintain distinct relationship orientations by attending to several processes, including: (1) the manner in which individuals form attachments and become intimate with others, (2) the mental working models (relatively stable cognitive scripts involving one's own behavior and the anticipated behavior of the significant other) that guide the development of intimate attachments, and (3) the attachment style of response to the significant other that the individual develops as a pattern for coping when he or she is distressed, to maintain the desired relationships (Guerrero, 1996).

These attachment systems or internalized working models and associated emotional and behavioral responses toward significant others are not chronically activated, and in fact there are certain situations that more readily trigger them. As described earlier, activation occurs during times of distress in an individual's life, especially within intimate relationships. It has been hypothesized that individuals with a preoccupied style of attachment are more likely than those with other styles to have their attachment style readily available for activation. This is a result of their hypervigilance associated with their intense attempts to attain and maintain proximity to romantic partners. They have an increased awareness of threat-related cues and a low threshold for detecting cues of a partner's unavailability. This hypervigilance keeps their preoccupied attachment style salient in their working memory and limits their ability to detect minimal threat related cues. The other two insecure attachment types, dismissive and avoidant, are more likely to keep their attachment system deactivated in order to avoid frustration and distress based on their attachment figure's unavailability. Therefore, they use deactivating strategies (inhibition of the drive to seek support due to feelings that proximity is not likely to alleviate distress characterized by the denial of attachment needs, avoidance of closeness, dismissal of threat and attachment related cues, and suppression of threat and attachment related thoughts and emotions) during times of distress (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2006).

In summary, theoretical and research literature indicates that adult attachment models are developed in response to early interactions with attachment figures, and they commonly persist over an individual's lifetime although they can be modified by later life experiences (Hazan & Shaver, 1994b; Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). Furthermore, adult

attachment models can greatly influence an individual's development of relationship behaviors and communication in adult romantic relationships.

Communication in Distressed Couples

Communication behavior in interpersonal relationships can be the foundation of successful and healthy relationships but can also be the cause of relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution. Communication behavior is one of the best longitudinal predictors of successful, happy, and healthy relationships (Guay, Boisvert, & Freeston, 2003; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). In fact, research has noted that problematic communication is one of the most common complaints of couples seeking therapy (Klinetob & Smith, 1996), because it has the most long-lasting detrimental effects on relationships. With a current epidemic of marital dissolution, understanding the root of the deterioration is important in aiding in the betterment of relationships.

Reviews of research findings indicate that in contrast to distressed couples, satisfied couples engage in more positive communication behaviors that are characterized by assent, negotiation, approval and caring, empathy, humor, positive physical touch, and positive problem solving skills (Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Weiss & Heyman, 1997). Their intimate interactions involve personal information sharing, a positive emotional tone, and the ability to let one another know that they are heard and understood (Prager, 1995). In contrast, distressed couples engage in less positive behavior such as criticism and derogatory statements about their partner (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Gottman, 1994; Weiss & Heyman, 1997). Often their interactions are also characterized by negative reciprocity, the pattern in which negative behavior from one partner evokes negative behavior from the other partner (Gottman, 1979). These

negative behaviors directed toward each other have a much greater impact on an individual's level of relationship satisfaction than do positive behaviors. In fact, Gottman found that a ratio of 5:1 positive to negative communication behaviors differentiates between non-distressed and distressed couples (Gottman, 1999; Epstein & Baucom, 2002).

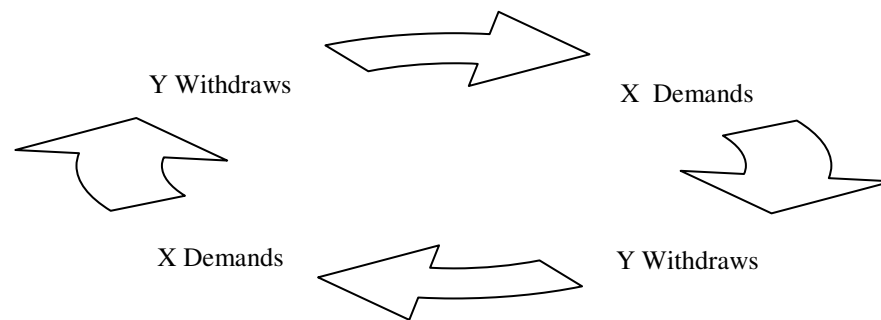
Research has shown that it is important to remember that it is not simply couples' exchanges of negatives that are destructive, but rather the particular patterns that the partners engage in (Gottman, 1994). There are certain communication behaviors, highlighted by Gottman (1994), that are considered to be particularly deleterious to relationships including: criticism (negative response to behaviors or attributes of an individual), contempt (strong, general dislike, disapproval, and desire to harm), stonewalling (shutting down of communication by ceasing to respond), and defensiveness (the act of protecting oneself from criticism). Distressed couples commonly engage in extended sequences of negative reciprocity using these strategies, a pattern known as cascade sequences (Gottman, 1994). Couples who engage in these negative ways of handling conflict are prone to the negative effects, including dissatisfaction and increased risk of relationship dissolution, until they find more effective ways to recover from the negativity (Wile, 1993). The present study focuses on the demand/withdraw pattern of communication that has been documented to be highly destructive to couple relationships and common among distressed couples.

Demand/Withdraw Couple Interaction Pattern

As described previously, the amount of conflict between partners is not as much the primary cause for concern as is the way in which partners manage the conflict. Thus,

conflict has the ability to influence a relationship positively if the couple can express themselves in a mutually positive manner that promotes relationship growth and understanding. However, if a couple does not have adequate skills to manage conflict in a healthy manner, conflict can have severely negative effects on relationship health and partner satisfaction. Negative forms of problem solving include criticism, blaming, denying responsibility, put-downs, and the demand/withdraw pattern (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Gottman, 1994). One conceptualization of the negative communication process exhibited in the demand/withdraw pattern is the following circular process: first, one partner criticizes and complains (demanding behavior) in an attempt to engage their partner and attend to the relationship. As this partner acts in a demanding manner, the other partner becomes defensive and subsequently withdraws from the interaction (Pistole & Arricale, 2003). This withdrawing behavior only further serves to fuel the demanding partner's need to continue to attempt to engage them in discussion of the conflict. Because demanding and withdrawing are mutually dependent, the demand/withdraw pattern is less a reflection of individual behavior than a systemic relationship property of behavioral inter-dependence (Caughlin & Huston, 2002). In relationships, this interaction pattern can lead to relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution.

Figure 1. Illustration of the cycle that occurs when partners engage in demanding and withdrawing behavior.



The demand/withdraw pattern has been the topic of much research, but has not always been identified by the researchers as the demand/withdraw pattern. The other labels that have been used to describe it are: (1) the pursuer-distancer pattern (Fogarty, 1976) in which a partner pursues the other partner who wishes to be more distant and therefore retreats from the pursuer's attempts, and (2) the rejection-intrusion pattern (Napier, 1978), as an individual, feeling abandoned, clings to their partner for security, and their partner, feeling "imprisoned," rejects their attempts for closeness (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). These alternate labels have attempted to remove the onus of the cycle from the demander, which has traditionally been thought of as the female in the relationship. The demand/withdraw label thus implies that the demander (female) engages first, causing the withdrawer (male) to withdraw, only perpetuating gender stereotypes during conflictual interactions. The pursuer-distancer label, on the other hand, tends to allow the possibility that instead of the pursuer beginning the cycle, the distancer may distance first.

As discussed earlier, the demand-withdraw pattern also involves one mate seeking engagement using demanding or forceful communication tactics and in response, the

other mate attempting to avoid the conflict by emotionally and behaviorally withdrawing, which causes the demander to pursue further.

Many researchers have attempted to explain the causes of the demand/withdraw pattern. The social and marital structure perspective, as identified by Eldridge and Christensen (2002), focuses on power and status discrepancies between males and females in the traditional patriarchal social structure. Essentially, society has long favored males and devalued females in social status, communication, and familial roles; thus, females are likely to demand change while males, attempting to maintain the status quo, withdraw. A second explanation that has been provided for the demand/withdrawal pattern focuses on gender differences. This perspective states that due to socialization differences, boys and girls are raised and encouraged to maintain polarized attitudes and behaviors in relationships. For example, boys are often encouraged to be adventurous and to explore vast physical spaces, and thus their sense of self is developed around maintaining separation. Thus, in relationships males are most often characterized as being conflict-avoiding, withdrawing, placating, logical, and avoiding emotions (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). Women on the other hand are socialized to be experts in close relationships and are encouraged to develop and maintain intimate connections; thus they are more likely to attempt continuously to attain and maintain proximity to their partners. A third model, the individual differences perspective, delves slightly deeper than the gender differences perspective and posits that differences in the demand/withdraw pattern are due to more intrinsic personality characteristics related to masculinity and femininity (Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1998). For example, a desire for intimacy is a personality characteristic that is socially identified as female.

Whereas the gender differences perspective would argue that because women are socialized to desire more closeness, then the female gender is the demanding gender, the individual differences perspective recognizes the possibility that males can be the partner with a stronger desire for intimacy and thus engage in more demanding behavior. So, instead of labeling the desire for intimacy as characteristic of gender, it is identified as a personality dimension that is possible and probable among both males and females (Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1998). Finally, there is the conflict-structure hypothesis for the demand/withdraw pattern which focuses on the structure of the conflict (Eldridge & Christensen, 2002). Specifically, conflict behavior can be conceptualized by understanding the partners' abilities to achieve relationship or personal goals. A conflict in which one person's goals can only be achieved through cooperation from their partner is likely to result in the use of the demand/withdraw pattern. In this conflict, the person seeking change is labeled the demander because in order to achieve change they must rely on their partner's cooperation. Therefore, they are likely to use pressure, criticisms, complaints, and demands in order to achieve the results that they want. The other partner who can maintain their optimum state without change is labeled the withdrawer because of their desire to maintain the relationship status quo (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002).

Much focus in research on this demand/withdraw pattern has been related to marital relationships; however, the pattern has also been found to occur in dating couples (Vogel, Wester, & Heesaker, 1999). Vogel et al. (1999) utilized a sample 108 individuals in dating relationships to determine if the gender-linked difference in the demand/withdraw pattern also occurs in dating relationships and whether or not there is a

difference based on the degree to which the topic discussed is difficult. The researchers hypothesized that (1) dating couples would engage in predominantly female demand/male withdraw behavior, and (2) dating couples engaged in difficult discussions will use more female demand/male withdraw behavior than couples discussing less conflictual topics. Measures used included the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ) (Christensen, 1987; Christensen & Sullaway, 1984) and the Difficulty of Relationship Issues Questionnaire (DRIQ; Vogel et al., 1999). The CPQ was used to assess each partner's perception of the way that discussions with their partner are usually conducted. The DRIQ was used to determine the extent to which each individual saw various issues in their relationship as difficult for him/her to discuss with their partner. Participants were informed that the study was exploring communication patterns in their relationships and then were given the DRIQ. Then, half of the couples were asked to fill out the CPQ based on their most difficult problem, while the other half were asked to fill out the CPQ based on the least difficult problem. Findings indicated a significant presence of the demand/withdraw pattern in dating relationships, a pattern which was found to be predominantly female demand/male withdraw as compared to male demand/female withdraw.

Thus the literature indicates that the demand/withdraw pattern is pervasive and detrimental to relationships, both dating and marital. Consequently, further investigation into its determinants is warranted.

Impact on Relationships of Overall Level of Conflict

As an individual observes interactions within their couple relationship over time, he or she is likely to develop an overall perception of the partner's pattern of interactions,

as well as to make attributions or inferences about the partner's underlying motives and intentions (Epstein & Baucom, 2002). When there is a significant amount of conflict in a relationship, individuals are likely to have more negative overall perceptions of their partner and their relationship, increasing the probability that they will interpret their partner's motives as intentionally detrimental.

When exploring the effect of overall relationship conflict on partners' attachment responses, several studies have found that strong conflict makes attachment styles more salient and accessible (Simpson et al., 1996). This saliency is especially true for individuals with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles (Campbell et al., 2005). For these individuals, major conflict and/or frequent conflict tends to elicit a cascade of negative feelings and memories that cause them to question the relationship and their partner's availability and quality. These individuals also see their relationship and partner less positively after conflict than do their secure and avoidant counterparts. Anxiously attached individuals also perceive greater amounts of conflict and more escalation in their relationships on a daily basis (Campbell et al., 2005), whereas secure individuals view both their relationship and partner more positively after conflict because it allows them to engage in behaviors that they both value and that confirm their confidence in their partner and relationship (Simpson et al., 1996).

The saliency and cascade of negative feelings and memories in anxiously attached individuals causes them to exhibit more hostility and more relationship damaging behavior when dealing with major conflict (Campbell et al., 2005). Therefore, these findings suggest that high amounts of conflict in relationships make attachment styles

more readily activated, leading to the insecurely attached individual's greater use of negative conflict management behaviors such as the demand/withdraw pattern.

Attachment and the Demand/Withdraw Pattern

There has been some research concerning the link between attachment styles and the demand/withdraw pattern of communication. Researchers have posited that attachment style may be a determinant of an individual's behavior during conflictual interactions in significant romantic relationships. Much focus has been on the relationship between the three style attachment styles in the model developed by Ainsworth et al. (1978) -- secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant styles – and couples' general conflict behavior and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, a relationship has been found between the anxious/ambivalent attachment style and demanding behavior, and the avoidant attachment style and withdrawing behavior.

Anxious/ambivalent individuals experience extreme preoccupation with the psychological availability of their attachment figures. Thus, when there are conflicts with these attachment figures, they are likely to experience a need for comfort and security; however, their past experiences tell them that this availability is unpredictable. Thus, these feelings of attachment figures' unpredictability are likely to lead anxious/ambivalent individuals to engage in highly anxious, angry, and hostile behaviors. In contrast, due to repeated rejection from attachment figures in infancy, avoidant individuals have come to believe that achieving psychological closeness with attachment figures is futile. Therefore, during conflict they tend to be cut off from their emotions due to their resignation that their partners will not be psychologically available to meet their needs (Simpson et al., 1996).

Simpson et al. (1996) completed a study guided by attachment theory that examined how individuals' perceptions of their current partner changed after a major or minor conflict. The researchers tested five predictions: (1) individuals who are more ambivalent and who discuss a major problem will perceive their partner less positively following the conflict than individuals who are less ambivalent, (2) individuals who are more ambivalent and who discuss a major problem will report more anger and display greater anxiety and stress than individuals who are less ambivalent, (3) individuals who are more ambivalent and who discuss a major problem will have less constructive conversations than individuals who are less ambivalent, (4) more avoidant individuals who discuss major problems will have lower quality discussions than individuals who are less avoidant, and (5) more avoidant men will provide less support if their partners appear more distressed than men who are less avoidant. Simpson et al. (1996) used a sample of one hundred and twenty-three dating couples who completed a battery of questionnaires. There were three phases of the study: (1) partners of the couple were first separated in order to complete a questionnaire packet including the assessments of attachment (e.g., the Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ) and the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)), and several relationship measures (e.g., the Satisfaction Scale, Commitment Scale, and the Love and Liking Scale); (2) five days after phase one, couples returned for a communication sample in which half of the couples discussed a major problem and half discussed a minor problem; and (3) raters independently rated the couples' discussions based on the extent to which each member exhibited high/low levels of stress, anxiety, warmth, and support, and how well each couple interacted. Findings indicated some support for the researchers' original hypotheses. First, individuals with more ambivalent

attachment styles reacted less positively toward their partners, especially during discussion of a major conflict. Basically, ambivalence resulted in greater stress and anxiety during interactions and a less positive view of relationships and partners following conflict. However, there were some differences between ambivalent and avoidant individuals. Avoidant individuals, unlike their ambivalent counterparts, did not report greater stress or anger toward their partners. This finding is possibly the result of avoidant individuals' lack of warmth and support for partners. Although this study did have several significant findings, there are several limitations that need to be taken into consideration, the major limitation being that the study utilized dating couples and the results cannot necessarily be generalized to married couples.

In a similar vein, Creasey and Hesson-McInnis (2001) completed a study exploring the relationship between attachment orientations in adolescence and relationship stability, satisfaction, and interpersonal behavior. The researchers hypothesized that (1) secure individuals would report less conflict management difficulty than more insecure individuals, (2) avoidant individuals would indicate engaging in more withdrawal during conflict, (3) anxious individuals would report the greatest level of conflict escalation, (4) more-anxious individuals would report the most problems with feelings and cognitions related to fears of rejection and abandonment than their more-avoidant counterparts, (5) the intensity of individuals' emotional reactions and confidence in coping would mediate the relationship between attachment and conflict management behavior. Participants included 357 undergraduate students who completed a battery of assessments including the Relationship Styles Questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) to assess attachment orientation, a measure to assess affect and

cognition during arguments (ratings of emotions of anger, sadness, and fear on 5-point scale of intensity and a 10-item measure of the individual's cognitive appraisals regarding his or her confidence in coping with negative emotions and behaviors during conflict), and the Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS; Arellano & Markman, 1995) to assess conflict management tactics. Findings indicated that individuals with more insecure attachment had greater difficulty managing conflict than their counterparts. The researchers also found that anxious and avoidant individuals utilized similar negative tactics, although past research has shown trends toward anxious individuals using negativity and escalation and avoidant individuals using withdrawal tactics. Possible limitations of the study that should be acknowledged included the use of a correlational design (which prohibits firm conclusions of causality), the use of self report measures, and limited generalizability of results based on the use of a college sample.

In regards to attachment and relationship dissatisfaction, a study completed by Simpson (1990) examined the relationship between attachment style and emotions experienced while individuals were involved in relationships and following relationship dissolution. The study used 144 dating couples who initially responded to a battery of measures to explore the level of trust, interdependence, commitment, and satisfaction in a relationship. Participants were contacted by phone six months later for phase two of the study. At this time they were asked whether or not they were still dating and then completed a telephone survey assessing the level of emotional distress experienced in relation to the dissolution of their relationship. Results indicated several findings related to attachment and emotions. Individuals with secure attachment styles experienced more positive emotions, as well as higher levels of trust, commitment, and satisfaction.

Attachment style also predicted the level of emotional distress following relationship dissolution. More specifically, avoidant men experienced less distress following termination of a significant relationship than their anxious counterparts.

A study completed by Shi (2003) examined the relationship between a two-dimensional model of adult attachment (model of self, model of others) and a two-dimensional conceptualization of conflict resolution (concern for self, concern for others), as well as gender differences. The researcher had three distinct hypotheses: (1) individuals with secure attachments will report greater relationship satisfaction and more positive methods of conflict resolution, (2) attachment styles are better predictors of conflict resolution than gender, and (3) there should be gender differences in insecure attachment styles and conflict resolution behavior (although no specific hypotheses about what the differences should be were made). The sample included 448 graduate students who were in serious romantic relationships at some point in time. Participants completed several questionnaires including the Multiple-Item Measure of Adult Romantic Attachment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) (a two-dimensional measure (model of self, model of others) with four categories including secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful), the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim, 1983) (a two dimensional measure of conflict resolution behavior (concern for self, concern for others) with four categories including integrating, dominating, avoiding, and compromising), and finally the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) (a measure of overall relationship satisfaction). Results of this study indicated that individuals with secure attachment styles were more likely to engage in active problem solving (integrating and compromising), and insecure individuals were more likely to engage in behaviors that are

not prosocial (dominating and avoiding). A limitation of the study involved the sample utilized by Shi. Participants simply had to have been in a relationship at some point in time. Findings are limited in that those individuals not currently in a relationship at the time of the study may not have been as accurate with self-reporting as those who were currently in a relationship.

Finally, and most closely related to the current study, a study completed by Pistole and Arricale (2003) explored conflict behaviors in relation to attachment. The researchers hypothesized that (1) individuals with secure attachments will report less threatening feelings in response to conflict, will view conflict as beneficial, and engage in conflict behaviors that promote mutually beneficial resolutions, (2) dismissive individuals will report more avoidance behaviors in response to conflict, (3) preoccupied individuals will report more attachment threat and concern with trying to reestablish closeness, and (4) fearful individuals will report an attachment threat, will be less preoccupied with obtaining closeness, and will use ineffective conflict behaviors. Pistole and Arricale (2003) used a sample of 188 undergraduate and graduate students. Participants were asked to think about a recent important argument in their significant relationship prior to completing the battery of questionnaires. Measures included the Relationship Questionnaire, a conflict questionnaire specifically developed for the study to examine feelings about conflict, a questionnaire to explore one's Style of Expressing Conflict, and three questionnaires measuring conflict behavior (conflict behavior questionnaire, the Ineffective Arguing Scale, and a Self Expression scale). Results indicated that securely attached individuals reported more positive feelings and behaviors in response to conflictual situations than did dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful individuals.

Preoccupied individuals reported more hypervigilance, positive view of partner, and high levels of emotional expression. Thus preoccupied individuals tended to be more concerned with closeness during conflict. In contrast, dismissing individuals tended to be less concerned about closeness and thus more likely to withdraw from conflict.

Similarly, fearful individuals distanced, but did so as a more protective behavior.

Similar to the above study, this current study explored the relationship between attachment and conflict behaviors using the four-category model of attachment, with a specific focus on the relations between attachment styles and both constructive communication and demand/withdraw communication. The current study aimed to explore this relationship and better understand the impact of attachment styles developed in childhood on subsequent romantic relationships during times of conflict.

Gender and Cultural Differences in Attachment

There has been little research conducted on gender and/or cultural differences in the formation or expression of working models of attachment. Research on gender differences in attachment has generally noted that there are no reliable gender differences on self-report adult attachment measures (Feeney, 2002; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

However, there has been some support for gender differences when assessing four categories of attachment instead of three. More specifically, in a study by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), results indicated that female participants received significantly higher ratings of preoccupied attachment than males on an interview-based rating, and males received significantly higher ratings than females on the interview-based dismissive rating. Because of such limited research on gender differences in attachment styles, and being that there is no reason to expect differences, this study made no

hypotheses and simply explored the research question, are there possible differences based on gender.

In regard to possible cultural effects on attachment styles, research has found support for the cultural universality of attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Some studies have in fact compared percentages of children classified in three attachment categories across cultures and found that the majority of children have secure attachments (van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). However, there are critics of the belief that attachment theory is culturally universal. Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, and Morelli (2000) argued that there are fundamental differences in the underlying philosophies and assumptions of attachment theory in Western cultures and other cultures, thus creating culture-specific socialization differences prohibiting the generalizability of attachment theory. A study completed by You and Malley-Morrison (2000) found that Korean adults scored higher on preoccupied attachment than Americans and Europeans. The researchers speculated that differences in cultural ideals regarding relationships and attachment definitions may have lead to these significant differences. Based on these studies, Wang and Mallinckrodt (2006) explored differences in Taiwanese and U.S. cultural beliefs about the definition of ideal adult attachment. They found that based on Taiwanese culture, behavioral norms involved more anxiety and avoidance than norms concerning ideally secure attachment from a western culture perspective. This finding supports the traditional values of Taiwanese culture that finds the explicit expression of one's inner feelings and direct communication of emotional needs as immature and unacceptable (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). Thus, there is continued controversy over the cultural universality of attachment theory and working models of attachment. Due to the sample

size and demographics of the current study, racial, not cultural, differences were explored. However, research on racial differences has been examined significantly less than cultural differences in prior research, and thus there is no reason to expect differences between African Americans and Caucasians. As a result, there are no hypotheses regarding such differences in this study but exploratory analyses on racial differences were completed.

Gender and Cultural Differences in Conflict Communication Behavior

There has been a significant amount of research exploring gender differences in communication behavior that occurs when a couple is in conflict, and even more specifically regarding the demand/withdraw pattern. As discussed earlier, the gender differences perspective posits that males and females are raised to develop and maintain polarized attitudes and behaviors in relationships, leading to different methods of communication behavior. It has been suggested that in relationships men are more likely than women to be conflict-avoiding and withdrawing due to their socialization to be independent and adventurous, whereas women are encouraged to develop and maintain intimate connections and therefore are more likely to attempt continuously to attain and maintain proximity to their partners (Christensen & Heavey, 1990).

Research has explored the cross-cultural consistency of both mutually constructive communication and the demand/withdraw pattern in relation to relationship satisfaction. Findings have indicated cross-culturally that mutual constructive communication is related to relationship satisfaction and demand/withdraw communication is related to relationship dissatisfaction (Christensen, Eldridge, & Cattapreta, 2006; Rehman & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2006). Whereas Christensen et al. (2006)

found cross-cultural consistency for the gender difference in the demand/withdraw pattern, that is that females demand more than males during conflict, Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe (2006) found evidence that females in a more egalitarian culture (American couples) are more likely to use aggressive demands in communicating about conflictual topics with their partners than females in a more traditional, patriarchal culture (Pakistani couples). Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe's (2006) results also indicated that in Pakistani couples husbands, not wives, used significantly more demanding behavior and were therefore less likely to withdraw during conflict, the opposite of the pattern typically found among American couples. These findings provide more support for the marital structure model of communication than the gender differences perspective. Again, due to the sample size of the current study, racial, not cultural, differences were explored. However, research on racial differences has not been examined significantly in prior research, and thus there is no reason to expect differences between African Americans and Caucasians.

As was the case with attachment styles, the current study had no hypotheses related to gender or racial differences in communication behavior. Consequently, exploratory analyses were run, comparing levels of communication patterns across gender and across race in this clinic-based sample. However, because this sample was too small to conduct adequate tests for gender or racial differences, these analyses were not a central purpose of the current study.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the four-category of attachment (secure, preoccupied, dismissive, fearful avoidant) identified by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) and both constructive communication and

demand/withdraw responses during conflict in intimate relationships, as well as the moderating role of the amount of overall conflict in the relationship. Based on attachment theory and preliminary findings in previous research, this study posited several hypotheses:

1. It was hypothesized that those individuals with secure attachment characteristics will report more mutual constructive communication behaviors (e.g., disclosing feelings, compromising, and expressing caring and empathy) during periods of conflict with their partner than those reporting any of the other three styles of attachment.
2. It was hypothesized that those individuals with preoccupied attachment styles will report more demanding communication during periods of conflict with their partners than their secure, dismissive, or avoidant counterparts.
3. It was hypothesized that individuals with either a dismissive or a fearful avoidant attachment style will report more withdrawing communication during periods of conflict with their partner than individuals with secure or preoccupied attachment.
4. It was hypothesized that relationships where there is greater overall conflict between partners, members of the couple will report more demand/withdraw communication and less constructive communication than those in relationships in which there is less overall conflict.
5. It was hypothesized that the overall level of conflict in the relationship will moderate the associations between type of attachment styles and degrees of constructive and demand/withdraw conflict resolution communication. Couples in which at least one member has a preoccupied attachment style and in which

high levels of conflict are reported will exhibit more demand/withdraw behavior than couples in which at least one member has a preoccupied attachment style and low levels of conflict are reported, whereas level of conflict will not be associated with a difference in demand/withdraw behavior for couples in which partners have the other attachment styles.

Chapter II: Methodology

Sample

The current study involved a secondary analysis of pre-existing data that were collected from couple assessments in a larger study in the Center for Healthy Families (CHF) at the University of Maryland, College Park. The collection of data for the original study began in November 2000. The sample initially included a total of 287 couples who had completed the minimum requirement of one assessment day. However, after crosstabs were conducted between the measures of overall level of conflict and attachment style a total of 225 couples remained. After frequencies were computed for the measure of conflict communication behavior, results indicated that the sample size only included 90 couples. With both of these losses taken into account, the current study included 72 couples for analysis.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the 287 Clinic Couples

	Males	Females
Mean Age	34	32
Racial/Ethnic Background (%)		
African American	44	46
Asian Pacific Islander	3	3
Hispanic	6	9
Caucasian	40	37
Other	5	5
Native American	2	
Education Level (%)		
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	35	42
Mean Income (\$)	34,358	24,886
Occupation (%)		
Homemaker	1	13
Professional (Associate or Bachelor's Degree Required)	24	25
Professional (Master's or Doctoral Degree Required)	12	15
Sales/Clerical	8	21
Student	8	14
Service Worker	6	5
Skilled Worker/Craftsman	19	<1
Owner/Manager of Small Business	11	4

Table 2 Continued

	Males	Females
Semi-Skilled Worker	4	<1
Unskilled Worker	4	3
	Couples	
Mean Time Together (Years)	7	
Marital Status (%)		
Currently Married and Living Together	55	
Currently Married but Separated	10	
Cohabiting but Not Married	16	
Dating and Not Living Together	18	

Overall, the sample for the original study (287 couples) was largely comprised of African American and Caucasian males and females in their low to mid thirties. Male and female participants varied in education level and occupation with the majority of both genders completing at least a bachelor's degree or higher in school and having professional occupations requiring an associate or bachelor's degree. Overall, couples averaged a mean time of seven years together and varied in marital status, with the majority of couples currently married and living together.

Definitions of Variables

Independent Variable

Attachment styles: One independent variable in this study was the style of attachment that is self-reported by individual members of the couple presenting to therapy. As proposed by attachment theory, attachment is defined as the affectional bond that develops as a result of an infant's interactions with his or her primary caregiver. Based on the type of interactions that occur during infancy, individuals develop one of four attachment styles that are largely maintained throughout their lifespan. The four attachment styles include: secure (comfortable with intimacy, positive expectations about relationships, confident, and self reliant), preoccupied (craves excessive intimacy, lacks confidence, and is dependent on relationships), dismissive (uncomfortable with intimacy,

overly self reliant, and views relationships as non essential), and fearful avoidant (fears intimacy, craves close relationships but fears rejection, and lacks general confidence).

Moderator Variable

Overall relationship conflict: The moderator variable was the amount of overall conflict that the members of a couple report as occurring in their relationship. Overall conflict is defined as the general amount of conflictual interactions that occur within a given relationship that in sum create an overall atmosphere of disagreement between partners.

Dependent Variables

Conflict resolution communication behavior: The dependent variables that were analyzed in the current study are partners' conflict resolution communication behaviors. Conflict resolution is defined as the verbal and behavioral methods a person engages in when discussing a topic of disagreement with a significant other. Conflict resolution behaviors that were examined in this study included demand, withdrawal, and constructive communication. A demanding conflict resolution communication style is defined as a person being critical, harsh, pursuant, and argumentative during conflict. A withdrawing style of conflict resolution behavior is defined as a person removing themselves from a conflictual situation physically or verbally. A constructive conflict resolution communication style is defined as a person exhibiting behaviors involving negotiation, caring, concern, positive affection, and equity.

Measures

The following measures were used to operationalize the variables in this study. Table 3 summarizes the variables and the instruments that were used to measure them.

Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)

The RQ (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) (See Appendix A) is a 5-item assessment tool used to measure the four-category model of attachment, including secure, dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful avoidant styles. Responses to the measure involve choosing one of four brief paragraphs that best describes how one relates to a significant other, as well as rating the degree of to which each paragraph describes oneself, using a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (1 = not at all like me, 7 = very much like me). Each paragraph describes one of the four attachment styles. The secure paragraph includes statements such as “It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others.” The dismissing paragraph includes phrases such as “I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.” The fearful paragraph contains statements such as “I want emotionally close relationships but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them.” Finally, the preoccupied paragraph includes statements such as “I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.” For this study, attachment style was determined based on an individual’s selection of one of the four paragraphs describing each of the four attachment styles.

Scharfe and Bartholomew (1994) found this measure of the four-category attachment style to be moderately stable over 8 months, with similar percentages of persons found within categories over 3 months. In relation to validity, the four-category model has been found to be consistent across self, peer, and expert reports. Also, Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) found self reported attachment to be predictive of outcome variables.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

In order to measure the overall amount of conflict in the relationship, the first 15 items of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1989) were used (See Appendix B). The DAS is a 32-item scale used to characterize the overall quality of a dyadic relationship. There are four subscales of the DAS, including: 1) dyadic consensus, 2) dyadic satisfaction, 3) dyadic cohesion, and 4) affectional expression. The first 15 items (dyadic consensus items), which were used in the current study, assess a variety of areas in a relationship where people may have disagreements, and respondents use a Likert scale of 0 to 5 (0 = always disagree, 5 = always agree) to indicate the level of conflict that they perceive in their couple relationship. Examples of these areas include handling family finances, making major decisions, household tasks, friends, and sex relations. For the current study, the index of overall level of relationship conflict was the average of the two partners' total scores on the 15 consensus items in order to obtain a total overall level of conflict for the couple. A median split determined which couples had higher levels of relationship conflict and which had lower levels of relationship conflict.

Communications Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ)

The CPQ (See Appendix C) was used to measure couples' communication behavior when discussing conflict topics. Christensen and Sullaway's (1984) CPQ is an assessment tool designed to evaluate individuals' perceptions of the dyadic patterns of problem solving behavior occurring in their couple relationship. The questionnaire consists of three distinct parts: (1) behavior when a problem arises in the relationship, (2) behavior during a discussion of a problem, and (3) behavior after a discussion of a problem. Respondents indicate the degree to which the interaction pattern described by

each item occurs within their relationship by using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 9 (1 = very unlikely, 9 = very likely). The CPQ has four distinct subscales, two of which assess asymmetrical communication and two that assess symmetrical communication: (1) mutual constructive communication, (2) mutual avoidance (3) male demand/female withdraw, and (4) female demand/male withdraw. For the current study the mutual constructive communication, male demand/female withdraw, and female demand/male withdraw subscales were used. A sample item from the mutual constructive communication subscale is “both members try to discuss the problem,” for the male demand/female withdraw subscale, “man nags and demands while woman withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further,” and for the female demand/male withdraw subscale, “woman nags and demands while man withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further.” Scores derived from the average of the female’s and male’s scores in a couple were used to indicate how much each communication pattern is perceived by a couple to be typical of their communication when they are in conflict.

The internal consistency reliability of the CPQ has been demonstrated previously by Christensen (1987, 1988) and Christensen and Sullaway (1984) for the mutual constructive communication ($\alpha = .87$); male withdraw/female demand ($\alpha = .66$), and female demand/male withdraw ($\alpha = .71$) subscales that were used in the present study (Vogel et al., 1999). Also, a study by Noller and White (1990) examined the discriminant validity of the CPQ. The authors concluded that most items discriminated between spouses who were high, moderate, and low in relationship satisfaction.

Table 3: Summary Table of Variables and Instruments

Variable	Measures
Attachment	Relationship Questionnaire: Selection of 1 of the 4 brief paragraphs describing attachment styles
Overall Relationship Conflict	Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Median split of the average of total scores for male and female partners on items 1-15
Conflict Resolution Communication Behavior	Communication Patterns Questionnaire: Average of male and female partner scores on 3 subscales: mutual constructive communication, male demand/female withdraw, and female demand/male withdraw

Procedure

The current research study involved a secondary analysis of data previously gathered a part of a larger assessment at the Center for Healthy Families located at the University of Maryland, College Park. Data collection began in November 2000 and is continuing to grow. Data for the present project were gathered within the original study using the following procedure:

Intake Interview

Couples initiate contact with the Center for Healthy Families and complete a 15-20 minute phone intake interview. During the intake interview, the clinic staff member obtains general demographic information about the clients as well as general and precipitating factors regarding their reasons for seeking therapy. When the phone intake interview is complete, couples are randomly assigned to receive potentially one of two treatments, usual treatment at the clinic or cognitive behavioral therapy. There are five therapists who treat clients in each group, and therefore the couple case is assigned to therapists based on the mode of treatment. Once the case is assigned to the appropriate

therapists during a weekly staff meeting, one therapist contacts the couple and an initial two hour assessment session is scheduled.

Assessment

The first assessment session is two hours in length and includes several parts. Couples present to the Center for Healthy Families together and are initially brought into a room together to complete preliminary paperwork, including the fee schedule and informed consent form. At this time clients are made aware of the clinic's policies regarding fees and confidentiality and the provision of treatment by supervised graduate students. During this time therapists also explain the assessment procedures and give specific directions about filling out the questionnaires. These directions include the following: (1) clients are made aware that the forms have questions on front and back, (2) clients are told that if they come to a question that does not apply to them they can put "n/a" next to it to signify that they read and chose not to answer the question, and (3) if they have questions they should put the forms aside to ask the therapists the questions. Couples are then placed in two separate rooms for the duration of the assessment session and are left to complete the forms by themselves. Included in the larger battery of assessment measures are the RQ which explores an individual's self reported attachment style, the DAS, which explores possible areas of relationship conflict, and the CPQ, which assesses each partner's perception of the couple's communication patterns. During this assessment session each member of the couple is given an individual interview by a therapist regarding domestic violence and substance use on both partners' parts. At the end of the two-hour assessment partners are brought together to discuss any final thoughts and or scheduling concerns.

The current study utilized couples' responses on the RQ, CPQ, and DAS from the previously collected database at the clinic. It is important to note that the participants' original responses that are entered into the clinic's database are coded in a way to protect all participants, so that there is no information included that could identify them.

Chapter III: Results

Overview of Analyses

A set of 2 (conflict level) x 4 (attachment style) analyses of variance (ANOVAs) was computed to test the study's hypotheses, with each ANOVA comparing individuals' scores on one of the dependent variables of communication behavior that individuals reported engaging in during conflict in their intimate relationship (as measured by the CPQ) as a function of their attachment style as measured by the RQ (secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, or dismissive) and their perception of the level of conflict in their relationships (higher or lower) as measured by the first 15 consensus items on the DAS. Each of the 2 x 4 ANOVAs allowed for the examination of the main effect for attachment style, the main effect for overall relationship conflict, and the moderating effect of overall relationship conflict on the interaction of attachment style and conflict resolution communication behavior. In each ANOVA, the moderating variable of conflict level was defined by a median split of the average of male and female partners' total scores on these consensus items of the DAS. Couples who rated their relationship higher on consensus were considered to have lower levels of conflict, and couples who reported their relationship to be lower on consensus were considered to have higher levels of conflict.

For the purposes of this study, a significance level of $p < .05$ was used to determine a significant main effect or interaction effect, and a level between $p = .06$ and $p = .10$ was considered a trend. When an ANOVA produced a significant main effect or interaction effect among any of the independent variables, post-hoc Tukey HSD paired

comparisons were conducted to determine which differences among cell means were significant.

In addition, exploratory independent samples *t*-tests were conducted separately for males and females to determine if there were any significant racial differences in communication behaviors or in attachment styles. Exploratory independent samples *t*-tests were also conducted to determine if there were any significant gender differences in communication behavior or in attachment.

Results of Exploratory Analyses

Gender and Racial Differences in Communication

When the independent samples *t*-tests were conducted for males and females to compare communication behavior (mutual constructive communication, male demand/female withdraw, female demand/male withdraw) for African Americans and Caucasians, there was a significant racial difference in scores among females regarding reports of mutual constructive communication. The means for African Americans and Caucasians were 4.28 and 5.14, respectively; $t(59) = 2.20, p = .031$. There were no significant racial differences among females in scores for male demand/female withdraw or female demand/male withdraw communication. For male reports there were no significant racial differences for any communication behaviors (mutual constructive communication, male demand/female withdraw, or female demand/male withdraw).

Frequencies of Attachment Style by Gender for Exploratory Analyses

For purposes of conducting the exploratory analyses after a loss of 72 males and 80 females from the original sample due to missing data, frequencies were computed to determine how many males and females reported each of the four attachment styles

(secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, and dismissive) as most descriptive of them. The secure attachment group was comprised of 109 males and 86 females, the preoccupied attachment group consisted of 38 males and 28 females, the fearful avoidant attachment group was comprised of 62 males and 99 females, and the dismissive group consisted of 32 males and 24 females.

Degrees of Attachment Style by Race and Gender

For the independent samples *t*-tests that were conducted separately for males and females to compare the levels of each attachment style (secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, dismissive) for African Americans and Caucasians, there were no significant differences in scores for females' reports for any of the four attachment styles. There was a trend toward a racial difference in scores for males' reports of preoccupied attachment ($t(211) = 1.84, p = .07$) with means for African Americans and Caucasians being 2.57 and 3.03, respectively. There were no significant racial differences among males' reports of secure, fearful avoidant, or dismissive attachment styles.

Gender Differences in Communication

For the independent samples *t*-tests that were to compare females' and males' communication behavior (mutual constructive communication, male demand/female withdraw, female demand/male withdraw), there was a trend toward a gender difference in scores for mutual constructive communication ($t(138) = 1.88, p = .063$) with means for males and females being 5.38 and 4.87 respectively. There were no significant gender differences in scores for male demand/female withdraw or female demand/male withdraw.

Degrees of Attachment Style by Gender

For the independent samples *t*-tests that were conducted to compare females' and males' levels of each attachment style (secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, dismissive), there was a significant gender difference in scores for the fearful avoidant attachment style. The means for males and females were 3.51 and 4.32 respectively; $t(498) = 4.39$, $p = .001$. There were no significant gender differences in scores among males and females for secure, preoccupied, or dismissive attachment styles.

Tests of the Hypotheses

Frequencies of Attachment Style by Gender

Frequencies were computed to determine how many males and females each of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, and dismissive) comprised of for the tests of hypotheses 1 through 5. The secure attachment group consisted of 35 males and 26 females. The preoccupied attachment group was comprised of a total of 11 males and 7 females. The fearful avoidant attachment group consisted of 17 males and 33 females. Finally, the dismissive group was comprised of 10 males and 6 females.

Hypothesis One

Individuals with secure attachment characteristics will exhibit more mutual constructive communication behaviors (e.g., disclosing feelings, compromising, and expressing caring and empathy) during periods of conflict with their partner than those reporting any of the other three styles of attachment.

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores for mutual constructive communication, the results indicated that there was a significant main effect for females' attachment style, $F(3, 64) = 3.74$, $p = .02$ (see Table 4). The means for the four attachment styles are found in Table 5. Tukey HSD paired comparisons of the four means indicated a significant difference between the secure attachment style ($M = 5.49$) and the dismissive attachment style ($M = 4.02$), $p = .02$ (two-tailed). These findings indicated that, consistent with the hypothesis, couples in which the female has a secure attachment style used more mutual constructive communication during conflict than couples in which the female has a dismissive attachment style. However, the hypothesized difference between the secure attachment group and the other two insecure attachment groups were not found.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attachment Style	13.72	3	4.57	3.74	.02
Conflict	6.04	1	6.04	4.94	.03
Attachment * Conflict	.75	3	.25	.20	.89
Error	78.25	64	1.22		
Total	2033.86	72			

Table 5: Cell Means for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	5.00	4.79	4.38	3.53	4.43
	Low	5.97	5.65	4.62	4.50	5.19
Attachment Mean		5.49	5.22	4.50	4.02	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores for mutual constructive communication, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for males' attachment style, $F(3, 65) = 0.32, p = .81$ (see Table 6). Thus, there was no observed difference in the amount of mutual constructive communication behavior based on males' style of attachment, and no post-hoc paired comparisons of attachment group means were conducted. Cell means for the main effect of males' attachment style on mutual constructive communication behavior are presented in Table 7. Thus the hypothesized differences between the secure group and the insecure groups were not found for male attachment.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attachment Style	1.36	3	.45	.32	.81
Conflict Level	7.81	1	7.81	5.52	.02
Attachment * Conflict	3.92	3	1.31	.92	.44
Error	91.97	65	1.42		
Total	2006.72	73			

Table 7: Cell Means for Mutual Constructive Communication as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	4.46	4.71	4.47	4.73	4.59
	Low	5.65	5.16	6.00	4.71	5.39
Attachment Mean		5.06	4.94	5.23	4.72	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

Hypothesis Two

Individuals with preoccupied attachment styles will exhibit more demanding communication during periods of conflict with their partners than their secure, dismissive, or avoidant counterparts.

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores on the CPQ for female demand/male withdraw, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for females' attachment style, $F(3, 64) = 1.89$, $p = .14$ (see Table 8). Thus there were no observed differences in demanding communication behavior for females based on their attachment style, so no post-hoc paired comparisons among attachment groups were conducted. Cell means for the main effect of females' attachment style on female demand/male withdraw behavior are presented in Table 9. These findings did not support the hypothesis, in that females with a preoccupied attachment style did not demand more than females with secure, fearful avoidant, or dismissive attachment styles.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Attachment Style	13.19	3	4.40	1.89	.14
Conflict Level	.04	1	.04	.02	.90
Attachment * Conflict	15.91	3	5.30	2.27	.09
Error	149.23	64	2.33		
Total	2314.34	72			

Table 9: Cell Means for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	5.83	5.86	6.54	4.78	5.75
	Low	4.90	4.63	6.89	6.83	5.81
Attachment Mean		5.37	5.25	6.72	5.81	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores for male demand/female withdraw, the results indicated that there was a significant main effect for males' attachment style, $F(3, 65) = 3.68, p = .016$ (see Table 10). The means for the four attachment styles are found in Table 11. Tukey HSD paired comparisons of the four means indicated significant differences between both preoccupied attachment ($M = 5.21$) and fearful avoidant attachment ($M = 3.78$), $p = .04$ (two-tailed), and preoccupied attachment and dismissive attachment ($M = 3.48$), $p = .01$ (two-tailed). These results indicated that, consistent with the hypothesis, couples in which the male has a preoccupied attachment style used significantly more demanding communication behavior during conflict than couples in which the male has a fearful avoidant attachment style or a dismissive attachment style. However, the hypothesized difference between the preoccupied attachment style and secure attachment was not found.

Table 10: Analysis of Variance for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attachment Style	24.46	3	8.15	3.68	.02
Conflict Level	.59	1	.59	.27	.61
Attachment * Conflict	17.67	3	5.89	2.66	.06
Error	144.03	65	2.22		
Total	1524.75	73			

Table 11: Cell Means for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	5.65	3.64	5.69	4.17	4.44
	Low	4.07	3.64	5.69	2.79	4.22
Attachment Mean		4.86	3.78	5.21	3.48	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

Hypothesis Three

Individuals with either a dismissive or a fearful avoidant attachment style will exhibit more withdrawing communication during periods of conflict with their partner than individuals with secure or preoccupied attachment.

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores on the CPQ for male demand/female withdraw, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for females' attachment style, $F(3, 64) = 1.07$, $p = .37$ (see Table 12). Thus, the hypothesized differences between dismissive and fearful avoidant attachment styles and secure and preoccupied attachment styles were not found, and no post-hoc paired comparisons of attachment group means were conducted.

Cell means for the main effect of females' attachment style on male demand/female withdraw behavior are presented in Table 13.

Table 12: Analysis of Variance for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attachment Style	7.34	3	2.45	1.07	.37
Conflict Level	.01	1	.01	.002	.96
Attachment * Conflict	20.01	3	6.67	2.92	.04
Error	146.02	64	2.28		
Total	1444.19	72			

Table 13: Cell Means for Male Demand/Female Withdraw as a Function of Female Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	5.04	3.63	3.71	5.17	4.31
	Low	3.50	4.25	4.83	5.06	4.10
Attachment Mean		4.27	3.98	4.19	5.11	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

In a 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' scores for female demand/male withdraw, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for males' attachment style, $F(3, 65) = .92, p = .44$ (see Table 14). Thus, the hypothesized differences between dismissive and fearful avoidant attachment styles and secure and preoccupied attachment styles were not found, and no post-hoc paired comparisons of attachment group means were conducted. Cell means for the main effect of males' attachment style on female demand/male withdraw behavior are presented in Table 15.

Table 14: Analysis of Variance for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Attachment Style	7.059	3	2.353	.920	.44
Conflict Level	11.350	1	11.350	4.438	.04
Attachment * Conflict	13.733	3	4.578	1.790	.16
Error	166.223	65	2.557		
Total	2445.146	73			

Table 15: Cell Means for Female Demand/Male Withdraw as a Function of Male Attachment Styles and Level of Relationship Conflict

		Attachment Style				
		A	B	C	D	Conflict Mean
Conflict Level	High	5.50	5.55	6.10	7.52	6.17
	Low	4.97	6.08	4.93	4.83	5.20
Attachment Mean		5.23	5.82	5.12	6.18	

Note. A = secure attachment, B = fearful avoidant attachment, C = preoccupied attachment, and D = dismissive attachment

Hypothesis Four

In relationships where there is greater overall conflict between partners, members of the couple will exhibit more demand/withdraw communication and less mutual constructive communication than those in relationships in which there is less overall conflict.

In the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' mutual constructive scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was a significant main effect for conflict level, $F(1, 64) = 4.94, p = .03$ (see Table 4). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 5, indicating that, consistent with the hypothesis, couples who reported lower levels of conflict used more mutual constructive communication ($M = 5.19$) than couples who reported higher levels of conflict ($M =$

4.43). Similarly, in the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' mutual constructive scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was a significant effect for conflict level, $F(1, 65) = 5.52, p = .02$ (see Table 6). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 7, indicating that, consistent with the hypothesis, couples who reported lower levels of conflict used more mutual constructive communication ($M = 5.39$) during conflict than those who reported higher levels of conflict ($M = 4.60$).

In the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' female demand/male withdraw scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was no significant effect for conflict level, $F(1, 64) = .02, p = .90$ (see Table 8). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 9. Thus, the hypothesized difference in the amount of demand/withdraw communication for couples reporting low versus high levels of relationship conflict was not found. In the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' female demand/male withdraw scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was a significant main effect for conflict level, $F(1,64) = 4.44, p = .04$ (see Table 14). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 15, indicating that, as hypothesized, couples who reported high levels of conflict used more demand/withdraw communication ($M = 6.17$) than those who reported low levels of conflict ($M = 5.20$).

In the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (females' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' male demand/female withdraw scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for conflict level, $F(1, 64) = .002, p = .96$ (see Table 12). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 13. Thus, the hypothesized

difference in the amount of demand/withdraw communication for couples reporting low versus high levels of relationship conflict was not found. In the 2 (conflict level) by 4 (males' attachment style) ANOVA comparing couples' male demand/female withdraw scores on the CPQ, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for conflict level, $F(1, 65) = .27, p = .61$ (see Table 10). The means for high and low conflict are found in Table 11. Thus, the hypothesized difference in the amount of demand/withdraw communication for couples reporting low versus high levels of relationship conflict was not found.

Hypothesis Five

It was hypothesized that the overall level of conflict in the relationship will moderate the associations between type of attachment styles and degrees of constructive and demand/withdraw conflict resolution communication. Couples in which at least one member has a preoccupied attachment style and in which high levels of conflict are reported will exhibit more demand/withdraw behavior than couples in which at least one member has a preoccupied attachment style and low levels of conflict are reported.

Hypothesis 5 was tested by examining the interaction effect of attachment style and conflict level on communication behavior. For mutual constructive communication, the female attachment style by conflict level interaction was not significant, $F(3, 64) = .02, p = .89$ (see Table 4), indicating that, although hypothesized, the level of conflict in the relationship did not moderate the relationship between attachment and conflict communication behavior. The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 5. For mutual constructive communication the male attachment style by conflict level interaction was not significant,

$F(3, 65) = .92, p = .44$ (see Table 6), indicating that, although hypothesized, the level of conflict in the relationship did not moderate the relationship between males' attachment styles and conflict communication behavior. The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 7. These findings provided no support for the hypothesis.

For female demand/male withdraw communication the female attachment style by conflict level interaction showed a trend, $F(3, 64) = 2.33, p = .09$ (see Table 8). The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of female attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 9. When conflict is low, the level of female demand/male withdraw communication is the lowest for couples when the female has either a secure attachment or fearful avoidant attachment ($M = 4.90$ and 4.63 , respectively). The level of female demand/male withdraw is the highest for couples in which the female has either a preoccupied attachment style ($M = 6.89$) or a dismissive attachment style ($M = 6.83$). In contrast, when conflict is high, the level of female demand/male withdraw communication is the highest for couples when the female has either secure or fearful avoidant attachment ($M = 5.83$ and 5.86 , respectively). The level of female demand/male withdraw communication is the lowest for couples in which the female has a dismissive attachment style ($M = 4.78$). This finding provided support for the hypothesis in that conflict level moderated the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior.

For female demand/male withdraw communication the male attachment style by conflict level interaction was not significant, $F(3, 65) = 1.79, p = .16$ (see Table 14), indicating that, although hypothesized, the level of conflict in the relationship did not

moderate the relationship between attachment and conflict communication behavior. The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of male attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 15.

For male demand/female withdraw communication the female attachment style by conflict level interaction was significant, $F(3, 64) = 2.92, p = .04$ (see Table 12). The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of female attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 13. When conflict is low, the level of male demand/female withdraw is the lowest when the female has a secure attachment style ($M = 3.50$) and highest when the female has a dismissive attachment style ($M = 5.06$). These results indicate that when conflict is low and the female has a secure attachment style males demand less and when the female has a dismissive attachment style they demand more. When conflict is high, the level of male demand/female withdraw is highest when the female has either a secure ($M = 5.04$) or dismissive ($M = 5.17$) attachment style, indicating that in relationships with high levels of conflict males demand more when females have secure or dismissive attachment styles. This finding provided support for the hypothesis in that conflict level would moderate the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior.

For male demand/female withdraw communication the male attachment by conflict level interaction showed a trend, $F(3, 65) = 2.66, p = .06$ (see Table 10). The cell means for the eight combinations of four styles of male attachment and two levels of conflict can be found in Table 11. When conflict is low, the level of male demand/female withdraw is the highest when the male has a preoccupied attachment style ($M = 5.69$) and lowest when the male has a dismissive attachment style ($M = 2.79$), indicating that males

demand the most when they have a preoccupied attachment style and the least when they have a dismissive attachment style. When conflict is high, the level of male demand/female withdraw is the highest when the male has either a secure attachment style ($M = 5.65$) or a preoccupied attachment style ($M = 5.69$), indicating that when conflict is high, males demand the most when they have a secure or preoccupied style of attachment. The level of male demand/female withdraw communication is the lowest when the male has a fearful avoidant attachment style ($M = 3.64$), indicating that males demand less when they have a fearful avoidant attachment style. This result provided support for the hypothesis in that conflict level would moderate the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior.

Overall, there was partial support for the moderating effect of high conflict on preoccupied attachment. In support, when males had a preoccupied attachment style and the couples reported high levels of conflict ($M = 6.10$), the couples engaged in more female demand/male withdraw behavior than couples that reported low levels of conflict (4.93). However, for male demand/female withdraw, high and low conflict levels had the same level of demand/withdraw behavior. For couples in which the female has a preoccupied attachment style, level of conflict had the opposite effect and less demand/withdraw behavior was reported, which was inconsistent with the hypothesis.

Chapter IV: Discussion

Overview of the Findings

This study examined the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior. Further, the study explored the relationship between conflict level and conflict communication behavior. Finally, a potential moderating effect of partners' perceived level of conflict in their intimate relationships between their style of attachment and conflict communication behaviors was also examined. The results of this study indicate that there was partial support for the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior and support for the notion that in relationships with lower levels of conflict, partners used more mutual constructive communication and less demand/withdraw behavior than in relationships with high levels of conflict. Finally, there was partial support for the hypothesis that conflict level moderates the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior. Also, it seems that the notion that when conflict level in the relationship is high, the partner who has a preoccupied attachment style, will engage in more demanding behavior than when conflict level is low was not fully supported.

The following are summaries of the specific findings for each hypothesis:

The hypothesis that individuals with secure attachment characteristics will exhibit more mutual constructive communication behavior during conflictual interactions than their insecure counterparts was supported when the female in the relationship had a secure attachment style. In the present sample, when the female had a secure attachment style the couple engaged in more mutual constructive communication than when she had a dismissive attachment style. However, it seems that when the male in the relationship

had a secure attachment style there is no more mutual constructive communication than when the male had an insecure attachment style. Whereas prior research has found support for the idea that individuals with a secure attachment style engage in more healthy and positive conflict behaviors than individuals with insecure attachment styles (Shi, 2003; Pistole & Arricale, 2003), this finding seems to indicate more of a gender difference. This belief is related to findings that individuals with secure attachments feel less threatened when arguing, and report significantly less fighting (Pistole & Arricale, 2003). One possible explanation for the findings in the current study may be related to the way that conflict communication behavior was measured in comparison to attachment style. The current study combined partners' scores on the CPQ to arrive at a mean score of mutual constructive and demand/withdraw communication for the couple. Thus, unlike previous studies which assessed individual attachment and individual conflict resolution behavior (Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003), the current study assessed individual attachment and couple conflict interaction patterns. Therefore there is a possibility that because the CPQ measures mutual constructive communication it did not allow for the accurate assessment of the individual's sole engagement in constructive communication.

The hypothesis that individuals with a preoccupied attachment style will exhibit more demanding communication during conflict with their partner than individuals with secure, fearful avoidant, or dismissive attachment styles was supported when male attachment styles were compared. This finding is consistent with prior research in that the clingy nature of individuals with preoccupied attachment has been found to be associated with individuals resorting to more negative methods of conflict resolution to

achieve change in their relationship more so than individuals with attachment styles characterized by the desire for independence and separation (Simpson et al., 1996). However, inconsistent with prior findings (Campbell et al., 2005; Simpson et al., 1996) and attachment theory concepts, when females in this study had a preoccupied attachment style they did not engage in significantly more demanding behavior than when they had secure, fearful avoidant, or dismissive attachment styles. One possible explanation why there was no significant differences between groups for females may be that, regardless of their style of attachment, females tend to use demands during conflict, consistent with a gender differences perspective on communication behavior rather than an attachment style perspective. However, this is just conjecture and further investigation is warranted.

The hypothesis that individuals with either a fearful avoidant or dismissive attachment style will withdraw more than individuals with secure or preoccupied attachment was not supported for either males or females. This finding contradicted previous research that has found that individuals with insecure attachments characterized by low levels of self disclosure and avoidance exhibit more withdrawing behavior (Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003; Simpson et al., 1996). Rather, there did seem to be a gender difference in the amount of withdrawal behavior, although this difference had not been posed as a hypothesis for this study. Males exhibited more withdrawal behavior during conflict, especially high conflict, regardless of their attachment style than females. This finding seems to support a gender differences perspective, suggesting that gender plays more of a role in determining withdrawal communication behavior than does attachment style. It is important to note that gender differences were not specifically tested in the current study; thus this trend toward a gender difference was noted as a

result of observation of cell means in the ANOVAs. One possible explanation for the lack of support for the current hypothesis regarding attachment style differences in communication is the limited sample size for individuals reporting both fearful avoidant and dismissive attachment styles, which ultimately limited the statistical power available to find significant results. Another possible reason could again be related to the measure used to assess conflict communication behavior. Individual conflict communication behavior is reported in conjunction with partner conflict communication behavior. It could be that when individuals with fearful avoidant or dismissive attachment styles withdraw during conflict their partners' response is also withdrawal. Therefore their interaction style would be mutual avoidance, a variable that was not examined in this study. Thus, it would be important to explore this variable in future studies to determine its significance.

The hypothesis that a higher level of conflict in a relationship will be associated with more demand/withdraw communication than will a low level of conflict was supported for female demand/male withdraw behavior in the context of male attachment styles. The hypothesis that the lower the couple's conflict level the higher the amount of mutual constructive communication will be also was supported in the analyses involving both male and female attachment styles. Thus, couples' abilities to engage in mutual constructive communication seemed to be affected the most by the level of conflict in their relationship. When conflict is low, couples seem to be able to maintain healthy and balanced communication with each other; however, when conflict is high these healthy communication skills seem to be difficult to maintain, regardless of the partners' attachment styles. This study also indicated that although high levels of conflict are

associated with couples' engagement in less constructive communication behaviors, those negative communication behaviors may not necessarily be demand/withdraw behaviors.

It is important to acknowledge that the measure of level of conflict used in this study may have influenced this finding. The consensus items on the DAS gather information regarding areas in which couples may not always agree. However, disagreement does not necessarily equate to high conflict. Couples may disagree but those disagreements may be acceptable to the couples and not cause any relationship turmoil. Thus, couples reporting high levels of disagreement may actually not have any more overt conflict than those reporting low levels of disagreement. They may simply disagree more but be able to communicate about that disagreement more effectively, thus creating no significant difference in demand/withdraw communication behavior.

Finally, the hypothesis that conflict level will moderate the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior, more specifically, that couples in which there is preoccupied attachment and a high level of conflict reported will exhibit more demand/withdraw behavior than couples where there is preoccupied attachment and a low level of conflict, was partially supported. Conflict level moderated the relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior for male demand/female withdraw communication behavior as reported by male attachment and female attachment, and for female demand/male withdraw as reported by female attachment. These findings support previous research that has found that higher levels of conflict make attachment styles more salient and accessible, thus leading individuals to engage in communication behaviors consistent with their style of attachment (Campbell et al., 2005; Simpson et al., 1996). This finding has implications for understanding couples'

interactions and a possible trigger for more exaggerated conflict behavior as influenced by attachment injuries. When previous research has examined conflict level as a moderator of the relation between preoccupied attachment and conflict communication behavior, studies have found that high relationship conflict triggers hypervigilance, emotion-focused coping, and an increase in dysfunctional interaction behaviors, leading to more demanding communication behavior (Campbell et al., 2005; Simpson et al., 1996). Thus it was expected in this study that in couples experiencing higher levels of conflict the individual with a preoccupied attachment style would exhibit more demanding behavior than in couples with lower levels of conflict. As reported previously, this was supported only when the male had the preoccupied attachment style and the interaction pattern was female demand/male withdraw. Thus, high conflict does not seem to be associated with individuals with preoccupied attachment demanding significantly more than they do when conflict is low. Even more surprising was that conflict level did not moderate the relation between attachment and communication in the direction predicted for female preoccupied attachment. Females in this sample tended to demand less when conflict was high than when it was low. It is possible that when conflict is low females feel more comfortable making demands of their partner than when conflict is high and possibly volatile.

Overall, the central goal of this study was to determine whether or not attachment styles were significantly related to conflict communication behavior. Previous research has primarily explored gender as a factor influencing demand/withdraw behavior during couple communication. However, this study's results suggest that attachment styles were more of a predictor of conflict communication behavior than was gender. For mutual

constructive communication, demanding communication, and withdrawing communication, the attachment styles hypothesized to have the most impact did, although not all of the differences were statistically significant. However, gender seemed to play a small role in both demanding and withdrawing behavior. Females seemed to engage in demanding communication behavior comparably across attachment styles, whereas males engaged in more demanding behavior based on their attachment style. Also, although for both males and females the fearful avoidant and dismissive groups were generally characterized by more withdrawing behavior, males overall seemed to engage in more withdrawing behavior during conflict than did females. As aforementioned, this seems to indicate some support for previous conjecture that males are more prone to withdrawing behavior than females due to their gender and socialization to be more independent and adventurous. Overall though, this study indicated more of a relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior, however, there may be some interaction occurring between gender and attachment styles in determining communication behavior.

The findings of the current study indicate the importance of exploring attachment styles of individuals involved in intimate relationships during therapeutic work with distressed couples. It has been proposed that therapists may use their knowledge of attachment styles and attachment insecurities to help get to the root of why couples are engaging in negative interaction cycles. The knowledge of attachment styles may also help therapists identify individuals or couples that are at risk for negative communication interactions. One important extension of this study would be to explore how each partner's attachment style affects the other partner and influences the couple's joint

interaction patterns. More specifically, do couples in which one individual has a secure style and the other has a preoccupied style exhibit a different conflict communication interaction pattern than couples in which one individual has a fearful avoidant style and the other has a secure style?

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results and when planning future research on this topic. First, the sample of couples in the clinic that was available for this study was fairly small and not large in relation to the number of tests that were performed, ultimately limiting the power of the study's analyses. The small sample size was especially limited for particular attachment styles, namely dismissive and preoccupied. There were small *ns* for these attachment styles, thus making it difficult to find significant differences among groups.

A second limitation was the use of self-report measures for each variable, increasing the likelihood of self-report bias. For example, in regard to the measure of attachment, many individuals may want to see themselves and portray themselves as being both comfortable and confident in intimate relationships. Thus, asking individuals to self-rate their comfort level with intimacy, especially with a single item measure, can lead to inaccurate measurement of attachment security. One possible solution for this limitation is using a multi-dimensional self-report measure with continuous rather than dichotomous rating scales to evaluate individuals' levels of attachment styles. Also, similar to the CPQ, individuals could report their perception of their partner's style of attachment as a supplement to the self report. Having both individuals' reports can increase the validity of the measurement. However, the CPQ also poses the possibility of

self-report bias. Individuals are likely to want to portray themselves as using positive and relationship enhancing communication and may exaggerate the negativity of their partner's communication style in order to appear as the 'healthier' partner. In the current study, however, this limitation was addressed by averaging partners' responses on each item of the CPQ allowing for a less biased estimate of the couple's communication behavior. Another possible solution would be to video-record each couples discussing a conflictual topic and having outside observers rate the couples' communication patterns. A combination of a self-report measure and a recorded interaction would provide the most accurate picture of the couple's common style of communication during conflict.

The use of a single-item measure of attachment, in which respondents categorize their predominant attachment style may not accurately capture an individual's overall level of functioning and style of attachment. Commonly a person's style of attachment is not all-or-nothing and it may be a combination of two or more styles that are assessed by the categorical index used in this study. Using a multi-dimensional measure would have provided more precision and validity in assessing attachment for the current study.

Fourth, there are limitations to the use of the 15 consensus items of the DAS to measure conflict level in the couple's relationship. The first concern regarding this measure is the limited number of consensus items. Although the items cover a relatively broad spectrum of possible conflictual relationship topics, it is not all inclusive and thus may be excluding certain topics that many couples would find highly conflictual. A second concern is that a lack of consensus is not synonymous with conflict. Couples may disagree about a certain topic, but the disagreement may not create problems in their relationship. Thus, the scale may not be measuring conflict level with complete validity.

Finally, the results of the current study have limited generalizability. The study used a clinic-based sample which limits one's ability to extend its findings to a broader population of couples. Although the study's sample varies significantly on characteristics such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status and length, and socioeconomic status, it includes only couples who are distressed and seeking help. Therefore, the results cannot extend to non-distressed couples, distressed couples seeking therapy at a non-clinic based program, or distressed couples who are not seeking therapy. Consequently it will be important to replicate the study with other samples.

Implications

Implications for Future Research

Although this study did find some support for a relationship between attachment style and conflict communication behavior which has significant clinical implications, the study could be improved in several ways. The first and most significant improvement would be the use of more objective measures for both attachment and mutual constructive and demand/withdraw communication behavior. More specifically, the measure of attachment could be improved by using either a multi-dimensional measure or reports by both partners per member of the couple. In regard to conflict communication behavior, a coded video-taped interaction about a conflictual topic could be used as a supplement to the CPQ. Having both reports of conflict communication behavior would increase the power of the measure.

Second, increasing the sample size, especially in regard to certain attachment styles, would be important to increase the power of the analyses and confidence in the findings. This could be done by replicating the study after more couples' data are added

into the database or by combining certain attachment styles into groups to increase the *ns*. More specifically future studies could either combine all insecure attachment styles together or just the two withdrawing types of attachment (fearful avoidant and dismissive). Also, it could be important to replicate the study using non-clinical couples.

Future research on this topic also could employ a different type of analysis, more specifically multiple regression. Using multiple regression would allow for the use of the full range of subjects' score on the continuous variables that in the present study were categorical independent variables in the ANOVAs. For example, it would allow the research to investigate the degrees of each attachment style as an independent variable predicting scores on each type of communication pattern, as well as interacting with *degrees* of conflict in predicting communication behavior. Multiple regression also would allow a comparison of the relative amounts of variance in communication accounted for by each attachment style when they are used simultaneously as predictor variables.

Finally, it may be interesting to explore the effects of conflict level and attachment style on mutual avoidance, another communication pattern assessed by the CPQ that was not investigated in the present study. Partners' attachment styles and the couple's overall level of conflict seem relevant for accounting for mutual avoidance.

Implications for Clinicians

This study has significant implications for clinical practice for several reasons. First, the study supports prior findings regarding the relationship between attachment style and communication behavior during conflict in intimate relationships. The study highlights that certain attachment styles are related to a particular negative

interaction pattern (the demand/withdraw pattern) in couples' relationships that has significant detrimental effects on the relationship. The study also highlights the relationship between secure attachment and more positive communication behaviors. Therefore, by providing support for such relationships, the study emphasizes the importance of addressing individuals' attachment issues and injuries during the course of therapy when working with couples, especially those presenting with communication concerns. Therapy models that utilize the concepts of the attachment perspective may help partners understand why they interact with each other in particular ways during conflict and also learn better ways of interacting. Past research exploring the stability of attachment across the lifespan has provided support for the notion that adult attachment styles are a combination of developmental history and current circumstances (Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). This means that current intimate relationships can have an influence on continued development of a person's attachment style. This finding would suggest that therapy can also have an influence on adult attachment, therefore meaning that attachment based therapeutic interventions at an individual or couple level could alter negative communication patterns.

One such theoretical model that this study finds support for is Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) developed by Johnson (1996). This model works to break painful interaction cycles, like the demand/withdraw pattern, by helping members of a couple explore and understand their emotional connections and attachment insecurities. Helping members work toward more secure attachment bonds in the relationship ultimately helps improve communication and move the couple toward a more healthy relationship.

Although there was not much support for perceived level of conflict moderating the relationship between attachment styles and communication behavior, clinicians should be aware of effects that high levels of conflict may have on a relationship and the propensity for the increased possibility of relationship violence. This support for the notion that relationships characterized by lower levels of conflict engage in more mutual constructive communication than relationships characterized by high levels of conflict has significant clinical implications. Because conflict level is related to conflict communication behavior, therapy should focus on helping couples learn the skills of healthy and positive communication. More specifically, therapy should help couples enhance negotiation skills, approval and caring, empathy, positive problem solving skills, sharing of personal information, and effective expresser/listener skills (Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Prager, 1995; Weiss & Heyman, 1997). Therapy should also focus on reducing the use of Gottman's (1994) four "horsemen": criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. Teaching couples these skills can increase their use of mutual constructive communication behaviors and ultimately decrease relationship conflict.

APPENDIX A
Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)

1. The following are descriptions of four general relationship styles that people often report. Please circle the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you are in your relationships with PEOPLE IN GENERAL.
 - A. It is relatively easy for me to be emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me. [**Secure**]
 - B. I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others. [**Fearful Avoidant**]
 - C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, and I sometimes worry that others don't value me as I value them. [**Preoccupied**]
 - D. I am comfortable without close relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me. [**Dismissive**]
2. Now please rate each of the relationship styles above according to the extent to which you think each description corresponds to your general relationship styles.

	Not at all like me		Somewhat like me			Very much like me	
Style A. (Secure)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style B. (Fearful Avoidant)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style C. (Preoccupied)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Style D. (Dismissive)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Gender: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Therapist Code: _____ Family Code: _____

Most persons have disagreements in their relationship. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list. Place a checkmark (✓) to indicate your answer.

		<i>Always Agree</i>	<i>Almost Always Agree</i>	<i>Occasionally Disagree</i>	<i>Frequently Disagree</i>	<i>Almost Always Disagree</i>	<i>Always Disagree</i>
1.	Handling family finances						
2.	Matters of recreation						
3.	Religious matters						
4.	Demonstrations of affection						
5.	Friends						
6.	Sex relations						
7.	Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
8.	Philosophy of life						
9.	Ways of dealing with parents and in-laws						
10.	Aims, goals, and things believed important						
11.	Amount of time spent together						
12.	Making major decisions						
13.	Household tasks						
14.	Leisure time interests/ and activities						
15.	Career decisions						

		<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>More often Than not</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
16.	How often do you discuss or have you considered Divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?						
17.	How often do you or your partner leave the house after a fight?						
18.	In general, how often do you think that things between you and your						
19.	Partner are going well? Do you confide in your partner?						

		<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>More often than not</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
20.	Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?						
21.	How often do you or your partner quarrel?						
22.	How often do you and your partner “get on each others’ nerves”?						

(Over)

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Check the statement that best applies to you.

- 6. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- 5. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- 4. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- 3. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- 2. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- 1. My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

APPENDIX C
Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ)

Directions: We are interested in how you and your partner typically deal with problems in your relationship. Please rate each item on a scale of 1 (=very unlikely) to 9 (=very likely).

A. When Some Problem in the Relationship Arises: Very Unlikely Very Likely

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members avoid discussing the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members try to discuss the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man tries to start a discussion while Woman tries to avoid a discussion. (Male Demand/Female Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman tries to start a discussion while Man tries to avoid a discussion. (Female Demand/Male Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

B. During a Discussion of a Relationship Problem: Very Unlikely Very Likely

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members blame, accuse, and criticize each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members express their feelings to each other. (Mutual Constructive Communication)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members threaten each other with negative consequences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both members suggest possible solutions and compromises. (Mutual Constructive Communication)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man nags and demands while Woman withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further. (Male Demand/Female Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman nags and demands while Man withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further. (Female Demand/Male Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man criticizes while Woman defends herself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman criticizes while Man defends himself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man pressures Woman to take some action or stop some action, while Woman resists. (Male Demand/Female Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman pressures Man to take some action or stop some action, while Man resists. (Female Demand/Male Withdraw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man expresses feelings while Woman offers reasons and solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman expresses feelings while Man offers reasons and solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man threatens negative consequences and Woman gives in or backs down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman threatens negative consequences and Man gives in or backs down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man calls Woman names, swears at her, or attacks her character.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Woman calls Man names, swears at him, or attacks his Character	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man pushes, shoves, slaps, hits, or kicks Woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman pushes, shoves, slaps, hits, or kicks Man.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

C. After the Discussion of a Relationship Problem: Very Unlikely Very Likely

Both feel each other has understood his/her position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both withdraw from each other after the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Both feel that the problem has been solved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Neither partner is giving to the other after the Discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
After the discussion, both try to be especially nice to each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man feels guilty for what he said or did while Woman feels hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman feels guilty for what she said or did while Man feels hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man tries to be especially nice, acts as if things are back to normal, while Woman acts distant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman tries to be especially nice, acts as if things are back to normal while Man acts distant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man pressures Woman to apologize or promise to do better, while Woman resists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman pressures Man to apologize or promise to do better, while Man resists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Man seeks support from others (parent, friend, children).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman seeks support from others (parent, friend, children).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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