

Abuse in dating relationships:

Do experiences of psychological abuse differentially affect men and women?

A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychology
and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of Carleton University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

Both men and women experience psychological abuse from dating partners, which can have negative psychological repercussions. The fact that individuals stay in these relationships may be a result of inaccurate appraisals of abuse. The present investigation examined whether abuse experiences were associated with gender differences in depression and whether abuse experiences were related to the appraisals of a conflict witnessed (in an audio clip) between a dating couple. It was found that men were victims of more abuse than women, but women suffered more depression associated with abuse than did men. As well, abused individuals accurately recognized abuse when they witnessed it, and even perceived it when none was present, however abused men tended to not recognize abuse by a female as serious, and both men and women who had experienced abuse assigned minimal blame for the conflict to the abusive male. The data are discussed with respect to the implications of appraising abusive situations incorrectly and the depression that is associated with abuse.

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Abuse in dating relationships: do experiences of psychological abuse differentially affect men and women?

Abuse in dating relationships may be as severe and pervasive as abuse in marriage (Rouse, Breen, & Howell, 1988; Straus, 2004), but the attention devoted to this social problem has been relatively modest. Moreover, despite the fact that the consequences of psychological abuse may be profound (Dobash & Dobash, 1981; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Okun, 1986; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Walker, 1984), the abuse research has predominantly focused on the impact of *physical* abuse on *female* victims when in fact, *both* men and women frequently report experiencing *psychological* abuse in their dating relations (Harned, 2002; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, Newman, Pagan, & Silva, 1997).

The prevalence of dating abuse is a concern because of the devastating effects on well being, and because women who have experienced psychological abuse from an intimate partner are at risk for both short- and long-term mental health problems such as depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety (Dobash & Dobash, 1981; Okun, 1986; Scafidi, 2007; Walker, 1984). Furthermore, although there has been limited research assessing male victims of psychological abuse it appears that males experience psychological victimization from their dating partners at a comparable rate to females (Arias, Samios, & O'Leary, 1987) and, like abused women, abused men suffer emotional consequences (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). It is not clear, however, if the extent of the consequences of intimate partner abuse is the same for males and females.

In addition to these psychological health consequences, experiencing abuse is associated with an inability to properly appraise relationship conflicts. In fact, there is reason to believe that individuals in psychologically abusive relations may not fully appraise their situation for

what it is (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Matheson, Skomorovsky, Fiocco, & Anisman, 2007).

In addition, not only might abused individuals inaccurately appraise conflict in their own relationships, there is evidence that they may not accurately appraise conflicts witnessed in others' (Danielson, 2007).

The present investigation evaluated whether psychological dating abuse differentially affected males and females in heterosexual dating relationships, such that one gender would experience more negative psychological health consequences than the other. It also explored how the type of psychological abuse being experienced (e.g. jealous controlling behaviour, ignoring, or ridiculing) influenced these effects. Another goal of this research was to investigate whether an individual's own dating abuse experiences influenced his or her appraisal of abuse when it was witnessed in others.

Dating Abuse

The rate of psychological abuse in dating relationships has been reported to be astonishingly high - with as many as 80% of college-aged individuals reporting some level of victimization - and dating abuse seems to be experienced just as often by males as it is by females (Harned, 2002; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Magdol et al., 1997). To be sure, these rates may, in fact, be lower depending on how psychological abuse is defined.

Walker (1984) summarized psychological abuse as including behaviours such as threats of physical harm, denigration of character or abilities, or suggestions that one's feelings or needs are not valid or worthy of consideration. Sackett & Saunders (1999) categorized psychological abuse into four types: ridiculing or making fun of the victim's traits, criticizing the way the victim behaves, ignoring the victim, and attempting to control the victim's actions which is associated with jealousy on the part of the perpetrator. They also found that fear of future abuse

is common among victims of psychological abuse.

Regardless of how abuse is defined, such experiences result in low self-esteem and a sense of not being in control, which over time can lead to more severe psychological problems (Walker, 1984). Indeed, women who have experienced physical and/or psychological abuse in intimate relationships are at risk for a wide range of mental health problems (Campbell, 2002; Heru, 2007; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Weinbaum, Stratton, Chavez, Motylewski-Link, Barrera, & Courtney, 2001), such as depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety (Campbell, Kub, & Rose, 1996; Campbell, 2002; Golding, 1999; Cascardi, O'Leary, & Schlee, 1999; Woods, 2000). In fact, psychological abuse may have more intense and long-lasting health repercussions than physical abuse, although the fact that these two types of abuse are often experienced together makes it difficult to accurately compare their effects (Dobash & Dobash, 1981; Okun, 1986; Walker, 1984; O'Leary & Maiuro, 2001; Tolman & Bhosley, 1991).

As a result of being abused, men, just as women, suffer psychological consequences such as feelings of anger, fear, helplessness, shame, humiliation, depression, stress and revenge seeking, as well as psychosomatic symptoms (Cascardi, Langhinrichsen, & Vivian, 1992; Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Stets & Straus, 1990), although most of the research that has reported these results involved physical violence. The research on male victims of exclusively psychological abuse in romantic relationships is scant, but shows that emotionally abused males report higher than normal levels of depression and emotional distress (Simonelli & Ingram, 1998) as well as PTSD symptoms and alcoholism (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). It is difficult to determine whether the symptoms experienced by male abuse victims are comparable to those experienced by female victims. It

has been found that female victims of severe physical violence showed more anxiety symptoms than male victims, however, it is not clear if similar gender differences exist in victims of verbal or psychological abuse (Magdol et al., 1997).

Gender Identity and Abuse

Traditionally, a female's gender role includes traits such as dependence, emotional expressiveness, a lack of assertiveness, and putting the needs of others first. A male's gender role, on the other hand, includes traits such as autonomy, self-confidence, assertiveness, and being goal oriented (Kessler & McLeod, 1984; Turner, Wheaton, & Lloyd, 1995; Wethington, McLeod, & Kessler, 1987). While this is maybe a somewhat outdated conceptualization, these traditional gender roles are still present to some extent in today's society. Taking this into consideration, one can imagine that different situations would differentially cause stress for males vs. females by threatening their gender identities. Thus, a male's experience of being a victim of abuse is likely to be different from a female's because females and males may appraise abusive situations differently. The relationship between gender and one's appraisal of a situation is based on the nature of the situation, how committed one is to the situation, and whether or not the situation is threatening to one's identity (i.e., his or her gender) (Ptacek, Smith, & Zanas, 1992), as well as how committed the individual is to his or her gender role (Eisler, 1995).

One might thus expect that males would be more affected by relationship abuse than would females because being abused might be a challenge to males' masculinity (Harris, 1995). Indeed, an abused man may fear being unfavourably viewed by others if he admits to being abused by his female dating partner (Flynn, 1990; Hines & Saudino, 2001; Migillaccio, 2001). In fact, abused males are less likely to seek support than abused women due to the stigma attached to being subordinate to a woman (Yeager & Fogel, 2006). On the other hand,

relationship stressors may in some ways affect females more than males because women tend to be more strongly invested in their identity as part of a couple than are men (Mills, 1984). A woman may also feel more trapped in an abusive relationship if she is dependent on her partner for financial support.

Appraisals of Abuse

Along with gender differences, individuals' appraisals of their own circumstance (or the circumstances of others) may be influenced by other factors, and may help to explain why they stay in abusive relationships. The reasons why some people remain with abusive partners may be due to reasons such as the welfare of children, financial constraints, religious beliefs, or even the hope that things might change. It is more difficult to understand why those in dating relationships remain in abusive situations, as many of the restraints present in marriage are typically not present for dating partners. It is possible that women in abusive dating relationships are not appraising their situation properly and hence do not take the active steps to terminate it. It has been suggested that when individuals encounter a potential stressor, they initially make appraisals concerning the threat this event imposes, whether the event is relevant to them and whether it is benign, positive, or negative (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Zeidner & Saklofske, 1996). If an event is assessed as negative or stressful, further appraisal is engaged in to determine what can be done to resolve the problem or contend with the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the initial appraisal does not result in viewing a negative situation as such, then no measures will be taken to resolve the situation. Thus, being able to recognize abuse, when it is present, is fundamentally important in order for the victim to make strides to escape the abusive situation.

Unfortunately, in the case of psychological abuse, recognizing the situation for what it is may be difficult, as psychological abuse can be somewhat ambiguous. The fact that individuals may not be sure if abuse is occurring might help explain why they stay in abusive relationships. In fact, there is reason to believe that women in psychologically abusive relations may not fully appraise their partners' behaviour as abusive (Laner, 1990; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Some possible reasons for this discrepancy between what is actually occurring and an individual's appraisal of what is occurring include the fact that women in abusive romantic relationships are confused by their feelings for their partners (e.g. they can't believe that someone they love would hurt them) or by contradictions in their partners' behaviour (e.g. one minute the partner behaves abusively while the next the partner acts lovingly) (Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg, & Walker, 1990; Short, McMahon, Chervin, Shelley, Lezin, Sloop, & Dawkins, 2000; Moss, Pitula, Campbell, & Halstead, 1997). It is unclear whether the same appraisal inaccuracies are present for men who have experienced relationship abuse. It is also unclear whether abused women and/or men properly appraise abuse that they witness in others.

Acceptability of Abuse and Blame

Another factor that may influence how one interprets abuse when it is experienced or witnessed is how acceptable abuse in a romantic relationship is considered to be. There are many reasons why individuals may consider dating abuse to be acceptable. For instance, past experience with abuse may change an individual's attitude about abuse. Women who have experienced aggression in past dating relationships appear to find violence toward women more acceptable than those who have not experienced past aggression (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

Abuse has also been reported to be relatively more acceptable in some situations than in others. For instance, it was reported that dating violence perpetrated by a girl was considered

more acceptable by both boys and girls than if a boy was the perpetrator (Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997). It has also been found that female perpetrators of violence generally tend to be treated more leniently than male perpetrators (Feather, 1996). Yet, men tend to be more oriented to social dominance than females (Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1994; Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000), meaning that males are more likely to believe that certain social groups should be dominant over others (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Thus, males may rate a male abuser more leniently than a female abuser because they consider it more socially acceptable for a man to be dominant over a woman than for a woman to be dominant over a man. Furthermore, compared to females, males are more inclined to blame victims of domestic violence for provoking the abuse (Bryant & Spencer, 2003), to blame female victims of domestic abuse for the relationship problems more than do male victims (Harrison & Willis, 1996), and to rate dating violence as acceptable to some extent (Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000).

The Present Study

The present investigation examined the differences in depressive symptoms associated with psychological dating abuse for males versus females, and how the type of psychological abuse experienced (jealous control, criticism, ridicule, ignoring, and fear of future abuse) was related to those symptoms. Furthermore, it was of interest to determine whether current or recent experiences of abuse were related to how an individual appraised abuse when witnessing it.

It was predicted that:

1. similar rates of psychological abuse would be experienced by males and females. In addition, exploratory analyses were undertaken to determine if the rates of different

forms of psychological abuse (jealous control, criticism, ridicule, ignoring, and fear of future abuse) varied between males and females.

2. both male and female victims of high amounts of abuse would report more depressive symptoms than members of their gender group who had experienced little or no abuse.

3. different forms of psychological abuse experienced (jealous control, criticism, ridicule, ignoring, and fear of future abuse) would affect males and females differently. For example, males may be affected more (i.e. experience more depressive symptoms) than females when experiencing ridicule from a dating partner since the traditional male gender role includes confidence and dominant status. In contrast, females might be affected more by ignoring behaviour since their traditional gender role involves being taken care of by their romantic partners.

4. the participants' current or recent experiences of abuse would influence their appraisals of abuse witnessed in other dating couples. As well, the participants' gender would moderate this relationship. For example, a female who was experiencing abuse in her own relationship may be desensitized to abuse or appraise abuse incorrectly such that she would not perceive abuse when it was present in an argument that she witnessed. It was thought that males would also have appraisal inaccuracies, but that they might be associated with different forms of abuse experienced compared to females.

5. the participants' current or recent experiences of abuse would influence their feelings about the individual involved in the audio-taped conflict who was the same gender as the participant. As well, the participants' gender would moderate this relationship. For example, a woman who had personally experienced abuse may rate a woman who they witnessed being abused as being more "like me," and thus would rate her more

positively, than would a woman who had not experienced abuse. Alternately, abused males may rate an abusive male more leniently than non-abused males since males who are used to being victims of abuse might be more likely to feel that a male being dominant over a female is more socially acceptable and just.

Method

Participants

Participants were 270 males and 348 females, consisting of 194 community members and 424 Carleton University 1st and 2nd year psychology students. The mean age of participants was 22.14, SD = 6.17 (mean age of student sample = 19.92, SD = 2.67, mean age of community sample = 26.99, SD = 8.47). Of these participants, 392 were in heterosexual dating relationship of 3 years or less at the time of study completion, 82 participants had been dating their partners for 3 years or less and were currently living with their partners, 144 participants were single but had recently (in the past three months) stopped seeing someone who they had been dating for three years or less. The minimum length of time that participants had been in their current or most recent relationships was three months. All participants were Canadian citizens or landed immigrants.

Procedure

Recruitment took place through posters placed around the Carleton University campus and in the community, as well as through online advertisements. The ads encouraged individuals to visit a website in order to participate in the study online. Once informed consent was obtained (Appendix A), participants created a user ID and password that was used to identify their data. Participants then provided demographic information including age and relationship status (Appendix B). The following questionnaires were then completed, with the entire study taking

about one hour to complete:

1. *Profile of Psychological Abuse*: This 27-item version of the original scale developed by Sackett & Saunders (1999) assessed the level of psychological abuse that the participant was experiencing in his or her current or most recent relationship (Appendix C). It included questions about the participant's partner's behaviour, as well as the participant's own tendencies to worry about the way their partner might behave in the future. This scale consisted of five subscales, which were calculated by summing the scores of the items that follow in parentheses: jealous controlling behaviour (items 1, 6, 10, 11, 23, 13, 15, and 17), ridiculing (items 8, 3, 16, 20, and 22), ignoring (items 7, 2, 12, 19, and 21) criticizing (items 4, 9, and 14), and fear of abuse (items 5, 18, 24, 25, 26, and 27). The total score was taken by calculating the mean across all items. The reliability for this scale was very good (Table 1).
2. *Beck Depression Inventory*: This 21-item inventory, originally developed by Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh (1961), assessed depressive symptoms by asking participants to choose, from sets of statements, the ones that best described the way they currently felt (Appendix D). The statements ranged from low to high depressive symptomatology. Individuals who indicated that they were considering harming themselves or who received a total score indicating high symptomatology received a special debriefing at the end of the study providing information about distress and depression, as well as contact information for support services (Appendix I). The reliability for this scale was very good (Table 1).

Following completion of the questionnaires, participants witnessed an argument between a heterosexual dating couple through the presentation of one of three versions of an audio

recording (Appendix E). In one version of the audio recording, the male was verbally abusive to the female. In another version, the female was verbally abusive to the male. In a third version, the couple was arguing, but neither was behaving abusively towards the other. Following this, participants completed:

3. *Appraisal of a Conflict Questionnaire*: This questionnaire indicated whether the participant assessed that the conflict between the characters in the audio clip was serious, whom the participant felt was to blame for the conflict, whether the participant felt that there was abuse in the audio clip, and whether it seemed to the participant that the individuals in the audio clip loved each other (Appendix F). Because each issue involved only one item, reliability estimates could not be obtained.
4. *Evaluation of the Same-Gender Speaker*: This 14-item questionnaire asked questions to assess how the participant felt about the individual who was the same gender as he or she in the audiotape conflict (Appendix G). These questions consisted of the participant rating the individual in the clip on a seven-point continuum between two adjectives such as unintelligent/intelligent, immoral/moral, and bad/good. The score for this scale was calculated by summing the score on all items. Missing data was replaced with the mean for that item. The reliability for this scale was very good (Table 1).

Participants then provided their contact information so that they could be rewarded for their participation, upon confirmation that their data was valid. Community members were given their choice of a \$10 gift certificate from one of Chapters/Indigo, Tim Horton's, Second Cup, Cineplex/Famous Players, or HMV. Students received a 0.5% grade increase in their first or second year psychology course. Finally, all participants received a debriefing explaining the full

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics and inter-item reliabilities of measures.

Measure	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	Number of Items	α
Profile of Psychological Abuse	618	15.33	16.19	27	0.93
Jealous Control	618	4.40	5.74	8	0.87
Ridicule	618	1.93	2.94	5	0.77
Ignoring	618	3.68	4.42	5	0.80
Criticism	618	0.95	1.83	3	0.77
Fear of Abuse	618	4.31	4.69	6	0.80
Beck Depression Inventory	618	8.65	7.87	21	0.91
Evaluation of Same-Gender Speaker	618	31.57	17.71	16	0.93

purpose of the study and providing them with resources for those experiencing depression and/or abuse (Appendix H).

Results

Preliminary analyses were performed to confirm that the participants in the community sample and the student sample were comparable. No significant difference was found between the two samples on total abuse score, $F(1, 616) = 1.22, ns$. There was, however, a difference in the levels of depressive symptoms, $F(1, 616) = 25.85, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.400$, in that community members ($M = 10.98, SD = 9.12$) had higher depression scores than did students ($M = 7.58, SD = 6.99$). However, when this difference between the two samples was controlled for by conducting a hierarchical regression where Sample (community or student) was entered on the first step, Gender and Abuse score were entered on the second step, and the interaction between Gender and Abuse was entered on the third step, the key interaction between Gender and Abuse still accounted for a significant amount of the variance in depression $R^2_{cha} = 0.008, F_{cha}(1, 316) = 5.96, p < 0.05$. Hence the community and student data were pooled for the following analyses.

It was also of interest to determine whether there were differences in rates of abuse and depression based on relationship status, since the participants for this study were either dating but living apart, co-habiting, or had recently broken up with their dating partner. A one-way between subjects ANOVA revealed that there was a difference between the amount of psychological abuse in dating relations experienced by those who were dating but living apart, those who were dating and co-habiting, and those who had recently broken up with their dating partner, $F(2, 615) = 34.18, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.100$. Post-hoc tests revealed that those who had recently broken up had experienced the highest levels of abuse in their most recent relationship ($M = 24.18, SD = 1.28$), followed by those who were co-habiting ($M = 16.52, SD = 1.70$), and

those who were dating but living apart ($M = 11.84$, $SD = 0.78$), $ps < 0.05$. However, differences in amounts of abuse associated with relationship status, while interesting, were not of interest to the present investigation. In addition, a one-way between subjects ANOVA also revealed differences of depressive symptoms as a function of Relationship Status, $F(2, 615) = 11.47$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.036$. Post-hoc tests revealed that there was no significant difference between those who were co-habiting ($M = 10.99$, $SD = 0.86$) and those who had recently broken up ($M = 10.37$, $SD = 0.65$) on depressive symptoms, however those who were dating but living apart ($M = 7.52$, $SD = 0.39$) reported lower levels of depression than the other two groups. Still, when this difference based on relationship status was controlled for by conducting a hierarchical regression where Relationship Status was entered on the first step, Gender and Abuse score were entered on the second step, and the interaction between Gender and Abuse was entered on the third step, the key interaction between Gender and Abuse still accounted for a significant amount of the variance in depression $R^2_{cha} = 0.008$, $F_{cha}(1, 316) = 5.74$, $p < 0.05$., thus the data for all three groups were pooled for the following analyses.

In addition, total abuse scores were highly correlated with all five subscales of abuse, which were also highly correlated with each other (Table 2). However, all subscales were looked at separately in the following analyses because it was thought that there would be subtle differences between the amounts of each type experienced by males and females, and that the relations with depressive symptoms and appraisals of the audio conflict situation would differ.

Gender Differences in Psychological Dating Abuse

A one-way between subjects ANOVA revealed that there was a difference between the amount of psychological abuse in dating relations experienced by men and women, $F(1, 616) = 5.97$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.010$. A one-way between subjects MANOVA conducted on the five

Table 2.

Pearson correlations among total abuse, jealous control, ignoring, ridicule, criticism, fear of abuse, and depressive symptoms (male participants above the diagonal, female participants below the diagonal).

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Total Abuse	---	.83**	.83**	.84**	.72**	.87**	.31**
2. Jealous Control	.81**	---	.54**	.59**	.48**	.61**	.23**
3. Ignoring	.84**	.48**	---	.69**	.55**	.68**	.27**
4. Ridicule	.84**	.52**	.75**	---	.66**	.69**	.28**
5. Criticism	.66**	.38**	.55**	.63**	---	.57**	.20**
6. Fear of Abuse	.87**	.64**	.65**	.63**	.56**	---	.33**
7. Depression	.41**	.25**	.39**	.30**	.28**	.45**	---

** $p < 0.01$

subscales revealed a multivariate gender difference, Pillai's $s = 0.092$, $F(5, 612) = 12.35$, $p < 0.01$. Follow-up univariate tests revealed that men were the victims of greater levels of jealous control, $F(1, 616) = 10.38$, $p < 0.01$, $h^2 = 0.017$, criticism, $F(1, 616) = 23.36$, $p < 0.001$, $h^2 = 0.037$, and fear of abuse, $F(1, 616) = 11.10$, $p < 0.01$, $h^2 = 0.018$, compared to women (Table 3). There were no differences between men and women in the amount of ignoring, $F(1, 616) = 1.59$, *ns*, and ridicule experienced, $F(1, 616) = 1.26$, *ns* (Table 3). It ought to be underscored that although differences between men and women were statically significant for some forms of psychological abuse, the effect sizes were actually relatively low, so implications of these results should be interpreted with caution.

Psychological Dating Abuse and Depressive Symptoms

A hierarchical regression with total Psychological Abuse score and Gender entered on the first step and the interaction between Abuse and Gender entered on the second step was used to examine the variance in depressive symptoms. Although there were strong effects of total Psychological Abuse, $sr^2 = 0.134$, $F(2, 615) = 53.89$, $p < 0.001$, as well as a main effect of Gender, $sr^2 = 0.025$, $F(2, 615) = 53.89$, $p < 0.001$, the interaction between Psychological Abuse and Gender further accounted for a significant amount of the variance in depressive symptoms, $R^2_{cha} = 0.008$, $F_{cha}(1, 614) = 5.89$, $p < 0.05$. To determine the nature of the moderating effect of gender on the relation between abuse and depressive symptoms, a simple effects analysis was conducted. As hypothesized, higher psychological abuse scores were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms for both males and females, but this difference was more evident in females (Figure 1).

It was also hypothesized that different forms of psychological abuse would affect males and females differently such that some forms would be associated with higher levels of

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) as a function of gender.

	Male		Female	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Psychological Abuse	17.13*	16.42	13.94	15.90
Jealous Control	5.24**	5.77	3.75	5.63
Ignoring	3.42	4.21	3.88	4.58
Ridicule	2.09	2.92	1.82	2.95
Criticism	1.34***	2.03	0.64	1.59
Fear of Abuse	5.02**	4.87	3.76	4.48
Depressive Symptoms	7.55***	6.87	9.50	8.48

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

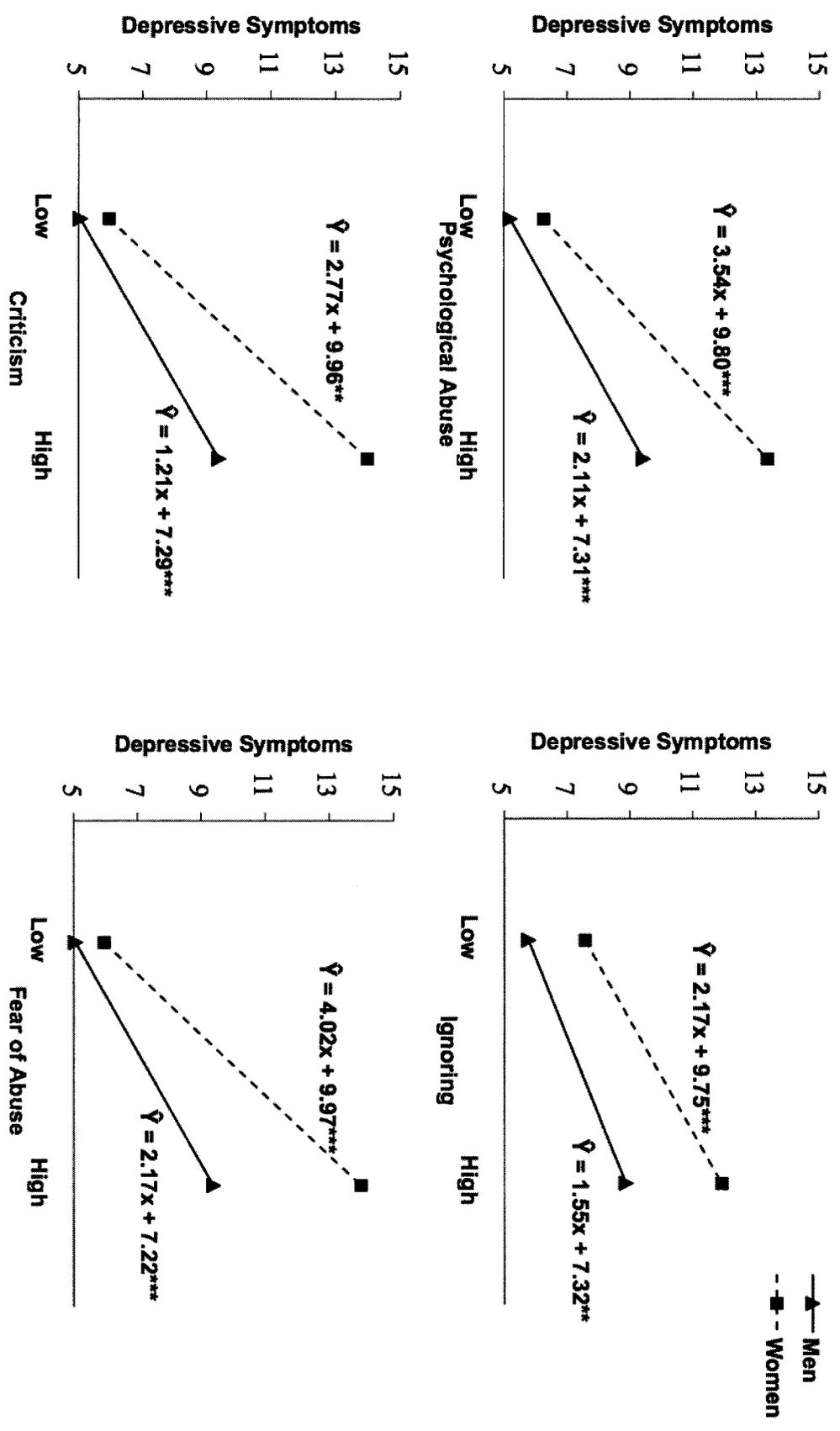


Figure 1. Regression lines predicting depressive symptoms from levels of Psychological Abuse, Ignoring, Criticism, and Fear of Abuse experienced within each Gender.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$

depression in males compared to females, whereas other forms of abuse would be associated with higher levels of depression in females as compared to males. Five hierarchical regressions with each abuse subscale score (Jealous Control, Ignoring, Ridicule, Criticism, and Fear of Abuse) and Gender entered on the first step and the interaction between the subscale score and Gender entered on the second step were used to examine the variance in depressive symptoms. The interaction between the amount of jealous control experienced and gender did not account for a significant amount of the variance in depressive symptoms, $F_{\text{cha}}(1, 614) = 1.02, ns$; nor did the interaction between the amount of ridicule experienced and gender, $F_{\text{cha}}(1, 614) = 1.17, ns$. However, there were main effects of jealous control, $sr^2 = 0.057, F(2, 615) = 23.92, p < 0.001$, and ridicule, $sr^2 = 0.084, F(2, 615) = 33.60, p < 0.001$, on depressive symptoms, such that higher jealous control and ridicule scores were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms (Table 2).

Although there were strong main effects of ignoring, $sr^2 = 0.116, F(2, 615) = 46.33, p < 0.001$, criticism, $sr^2 = 0.056, F(2, 615) = 23.41, p < 0.001$, and fear of abuse, $sr^2 = 0.156, F(2, 615) = 63.42, p < 0.001$, on depressive symptoms, each of these effects was moderated by gender; ignoring, $R^2_{\text{cha}} = 0.006, F_{\text{cha}}(1, 614) = 4.10, p < 0.05$, criticism, $R^2_{\text{cha}} = 0.009, F_{\text{cha}}(1, 614) = 6.23, p < 0.05$, and fear of abuse, $R^2_{\text{cha}} = 0.014, F_{\text{cha}}(1, 614) = 10.20, p < 0.01$. Simple effects analyses for each of males and females revealed that while higher ignoring, criticism, and fear of abuse scores were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms for both males and females, the relations between each of these dimensions of abuse and depressive symptoms were higher in females compared to males (Figure 1).

It should be noted that the low effect size for each of these interaction indicates that the interaction may account for very little of the variance in depressive symptoms. As depicted in the figure and confirmed by analyses, most of the variance appears to be accounted for by the main effects of ignoring, criticism, fear of abuse, and gender.

Personal Abuse Experience and Appraisals of the Conflict Situation

The participants made several appraisals concerning the content of the audio clips that they heard. Most of these appraisals were highly correlated with each other (Table 5). However the decision was made to look at each appraisal separately because they each addressed conceptually different issues. To analyze how participants' gender and psychological abuse experiences moderated the effects of the nature of the conflict heard and the participants' appraisals of the various aspects of the clips, two dummy variables were first created to compare the audio clips. For the first, the no-abuse condition was coded as -2, the abusive male condition was coded as +1 and the abusive female condition was also coded as +1. For the second, the no-abuse condition was coded as 0, the abusive male condition was coded as -1, and the abusive female condition was coded as +1. A hierarchical regression analysis was then run, with gender and abuse score entered on the first step, the two dummy variables entered on the second step, the interaction between gender and abuse score entered on the third step, the interactions between each dummy variable and gender entered on the fourth step, the interactions between each dummy variable and abuse score entered on the fifth step, and three-way interactions between each dummy variable with gender and abuse score entered on the sixth step.

There were no significant three-way interactions between the gender of the participant, the participants' total psychological abuse experiences, or the nature of conflict conveyed in the audio clip on any of appraisals of various aspects of the dynamics between the couple in the audio clip. These appraisals consisted of how serious the situation in the clip was, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 2.90, ns$, how much the male in the clip was to blame for the conflict, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.06, ns$, how much the female in the clip was to blame, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.21, ns$, how abusive the male in the clip was, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.87, ns$, how abusive the female was, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.19, ns$, how much the male loved the female in the clip, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 1.51, ns$, how much the female loved the male, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.27, ns$, or the evaluation of the person in the clip who was of the same gender as the participant, $F_{cha}(2, 606) = 0.34, ns$.

There were, however, a number of main effects and two-way interactions. There was a main effect of which conflict audio clip was heard on how serious the situation was perceived to be, $R^2_{cha} = 0.221, F_{cha}(2, 613) = 86.75, p < 0.001$. In particular, not surprisingly, the no-abuse audio clip ($M = 4.64, SD = 0.98$) was perceived as less serious than the clips portraying either the male as abusive ($M = 5.57, SD = 0.64$) or the female as abusive ($M = 5.49, SD = 0.71$), $p < 0.001$; these latter two conditions did not differ.

There was also a weak interaction between gender, abuse involving criticism, and which clip was heard on how serious the situation in the audio clip was perceived to be, $R^2_{cha} = 0.010, F_{cha}(2, 606) = 3.94, p < 0.05$. Specifically, there was an interaction between gender and abusive criticism in the perceived severity of the situation when the female was abusive, $R^2_{cha} = 0.020, F_{cha}(2, 609) = 4.38, p < 0.05$. A simple effects analysis revealed that women's ratings of how serious the conflict situation was did not

Table 4.

Pearson correlations among appraisals of seriousness of situation, male to blame, female to blame, abusiveness of male, abusiveness of female, male loves female, female loves male, and evaluation of same gender speaker (male participants above the diagonal, female participants below the diagonal).

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Seriousness of Situation	---	.14*	.13*	.26**	.16**	-.30**	-.22**	-.01
2. Male to Blame	.20**	---	-.48**	.78**	-.43**	-.39**	.35**	-.60**
3. Female to Blame	.09	-.45**	---	-.49**	.83**	.37**	-.42**	.62**
4. Abusiveness of Male	.29**	.74**	-.47**	---	-.39**	-.48**	.31**	-.64**
5. Abusiveness of Female	.20**	-.41**	.84**	-.32**	---	.31**	-.50**	.53**
6. Male Loves Female	-.27**	-.47**	.41**	-.49**	.35**	---	.22**	.52**
7. Female Loves Male	-.15**	.37**	-.53**	.37**	-.57**	.10	---	-.22*
8. Evaluation of Same-Gender Speaker	-.12*	.40**	-.59**	.39**	-.60**	-.19**	.52**	---

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

differ based on the level of criticism experienced, whereas men's ratings of the seriousness of the situation were somewhat lower when they had experienced high levels of criticism (Figure 2). In the other two audio conditions, there were no interactions or main effects of gender or abusive criticism on perceptions of the seriousness of the conflict, nor did any of the other forms of abuse experienced influence perceptions of the seriousness of the conflict.

Not surprisingly, appraisals of how much the male was to blame for the conflict were also influenced by the main effect of which conflict was heard, $R^2_{cha} = 0.365$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 177.47$, $p < 0.001$. Follow-up comparisons showed that the least amount of blame was assigned to the male when the female was abusive ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.67$), followed by the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.20$), and the male was perceived as most to blame when he was abusive ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 0.89$), $ps < .05$. This effect was weakly moderated by the amount of total abuse the participant had experienced, $R^2_{cha} = 0.007$, $F_{cha}(2, 608) = 3.35$, $p < 0.05$. In particular, among participants who heard the abusive male clip, higher abuse scores were associated with lower ratings of how much the male was to blame, ($B = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$), but there was no association between abuse scores and how much the male was to blame for those who heard the abusive female clip ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.26$), or the audio clip in which there was no abuse ($B = 0.11$, $p = 0.12$). This pattern of results was also found when participants' experiences of jealous control were considered alone, but was not replicated with the other forms of abuse.

Additionally, and as would be expected, there was a main effect of which conflict audio clip was heard on appraisals of how abusive the male in the conflict was, $R^2_{cha} = 0.502$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 314.96$, $p < 0.001$. Follow-up comparisons showed that the male in

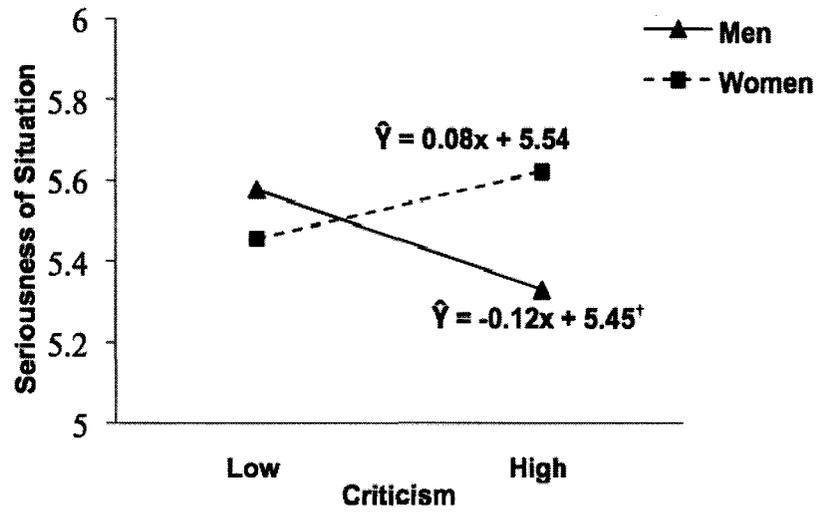


Figure 2. Regression lines predicting ratings of Seriousness of Situation from level of Criticism experienced within each Gender for those who heard the “Abusive Female” clip.

$^\dagger p < 0.1$

the abusive male conflict ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 0.69$) was rated as the most abusive, followed by the male in the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.60$), with the male in the abusive female conflict being rated as the least abusive ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.70$), $p < .05$.

There was also an interaction between which clip was heard and the amount of jealous control experienced on appraisals of how abusive the male in the clip was, $R^2_{cha} = 0.009$, $F_{cha}(2, 608) = 5.48$, $p < 0.01$. In particular, among participants who heard the no abuse clip, higher jealous control scores were associated with higher ratings of how abusive the male was, ($B = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$), but there was no association between jealous control scores and how abusive the male was to perceived to be for those who heard the abusive male clip ($B = -0.09$, $p = 0.22$) or the abusive female clip ($B = -0.01$, $p = 0.87$).

Finally, there was again a main effect of which conflict audio clip was heard, $R^2_{cha} = 0.320$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 145.85$, $p < 0.001$, on appraisals of how much the male loved the female in the conflict. The male in the abusive male conflict ($M = 1.21$, $SD = 1.21$) was rated as loving the female significantly less than the male in the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.27$) and the male in the abusive female conflict ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.31$).

When appraisals of the female were examined, in all cases, there were main effects for conflict condition conveyed. Specifically, appraisals of how much the female was to blame for the conflict $R^2_{cha} = 0.502$, $F_{cha}(2, 612) = 308.40$, $p < 0.001$, varied such that the least amount of blame was assigned to the female in the abusive male conflict ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.59$) followed by the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.29$), with the abusive female being rated as the most to blame ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 0.84$). Likewise, the female in the abusive male conflict was rated as the least abusive ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.71$), followed by the female in the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.65$), with the abusive

female ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 0.66$) being rated as the most abusive, $R^2_{cha} = 0.564$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 398.24$, $p < 0.001$. Finally, the female in the abusive male conflict ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.51$) was rated as loving the male the most, followed by the female in the no abuse conflict ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.24$), with the female in the abusive female conflict being seen as loving the male the least ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.38$), $R^2_{cha} = 0.322$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 147.87$, $p < 0.001$

Appraisals of how much the female loved the male in the conflict were also associated with total abuse experiences, $R^2_{cha} = 0.012$, $F_{cha}(2, 615) = 3.60$, $p < 0.05$, in that those who reported higher levels of abuse were more likely to perceive the female to love the male ($B = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). Similar results were found for the main effects of ignoring ($B = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$), ridicule ($B = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$), and fear of abuse ($B = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$), but not for jealous control ($B = 0.05$, $p = 0.18$) or criticism ($B = 0.06$, $p = 0.12$).

There was also a main effect of abuse experiences on evaluations of the same-gender speaker in the conflict, $R^2_{cha} = 0.016$, $F_{cha}(2, 615) = 5.00$, $p < 0.01$, in that participants who reported greater abuse more positively evaluated the same gender character in the audio clip ($B = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). Similar results were found for the main effects of jealous control ($B = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$), ignoring ($B = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$), and ridicule ($B = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$), but not for criticism ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.06$) or fear of abuse ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.06$).

Evaluations of the same-gender speaker were also influenced by a main effect of which conflict audio clip was heard, $R^2_{cha} = 0.042$, $F_{cha}(2, 613) = 13.58$, $p < 0.001$. The same-gender individual in the no abuse conflict ($M = 36.39$, $SD = 13.99$) was rated more

positively than in both the abusive male conflict ($M = 30.95$, $SD = 19.34$) and the abusive female conflict ($M = 27.55$, $SD = 18.27$).

Finally, there was also an interaction between which clip was heard and gender on evaluations of the same-gender speaker in the conflict, $R^2_{\text{cha}} = 0.396$, $F_{\text{cha}}(2, 610) = 223.68$, $p < 0.001$. In particular, among those who heard the abusive female clip, males evaluated the male in the clip ($M = 42.88$, $SD = 15.28$) more positively than females evaluated the female in the clip ($M = 17.36$, $SD = 11.87$). Correspondingly, among those who heard the abusive male clip, females ($M = 44.66$, $SD = 14.81$) evaluated the female in the clip more positively than males ($M = 15.03$, $SD = 9.02$) evaluated the male in the clip. For those who heard the no abuse clip, males evaluated the male ($M = 38.52$, $SD = 12.75$) only slightly more positively than females evaluated the female ($M = 34.63$, $SD = 14.75$).

Discussion

Psychological abuse in dating relationships is an insidious problem (Rouse, Breen, & Howell, 1988; Straus, 2004) that has profound consequences for its victims (Dobash & Dobash, 1981; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Okun, 1986; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Walker, 1984). Although abuse has typically been thought of in terms of women being abused by men, similar rates of psychological dating abuse have been reported by males and females (Harned, 2002; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Magdol et al., 1997). In fact, in the present study men reported experiencing more of certain types of abuse from their dating partners than did women. Specifically, men experienced more jealous attempts to control them, more criticism of their behaviour, and were more likely

to be fearful of future abuse. In effect, women appear to be more likely to attempt to control their male partners and to utilize criticism when in a conflict.

It was surprising that men experienced more fear of abuse than women. One might think that women would be more fearful of psychological abuse escalating to physical violence, as this would be more physically dangerous for women than for men (Harned, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Perhaps men in the present study feared the escalation of abuse more than women, however, because they were more concerned that psychological abuse would turn into physical violence. The present study did not determine whether physical abuse was present, but previous studies have, in fact, indicated that men may be more likely than women to be victims of physical abuse (Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, Newman, Pagan, & Silva, 1997). It may also be the case that, because it goes against gender stereotypes for men to be victimized by women, men may feel more worry or dread about abuse that may happen in public or for friends and family to witness because it would be embarrassing and emasculating (Flynn, 1990; Hines & Saudino, 2001; Migliaccio, 2001).

Of course, abuse is a concern because of the effect that it can have on mental health, as several studies have shown that depressive symptoms are common in victims of psychological abuse (Campbell, Kub, & Rose, 1996; Campbell, 2002; Golding, 1999; Cascardi, O'Leary, & Schlee, 1999; Woods, 2000). In accordance with this previous research, the results of the present study showed that higher rates of psychological abuse were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms for both men and women. In addition, for women depression was more closely aligned with the abuse that they had experienced. While both men and women had higher levels of depression if they had

experienced high levels of abuse compared to those who experienced low levels, there was a bigger difference in depression between low-abused and high-abused females than between low-abused and high-abused males. This may be because females are more prone to depression than males (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1990; Weissman, Bland, Canino, Faravelli, Greenwald, Hwu, et al., 1996), and this tendency toward depressive symptoms may be triggered more readily in females by stressors such as abuse from a dating partner (Breslau, Davis, Andreski, Peterson, & Schultz, 1997).

Thus, it appeared that the negative mental health consequences of psychological abuse might, at least insofar as depression is concerned, differ in men and women under high conditions of certain forms of psychological abuse. In fact, while men were victims of similar amounts of ignoring as women and more criticism and fear of abuse than women, women suffered more depression associated with these types of abuse than did men.

Some previous studies have shown that the most damaging types of psychological abuse were ridicule (Follingstad, 1990), and dominant, controlling behaviour (Dutton & Painter, 1993; Nightingale, 1994), which does not mesh with the results of the present study. However, Sackett and Saunders (1999), who developed the Psychological Abuse Scale that was used in the present study, found that ignoring and fear of abuse are highly correlated with depression. In their study, criticism was not as highly correlated with depression, while ridicule and jealous control were very highly correlated with it. However, their participant sample contained some women who were living in shelters. The sheltered women tended to experience more ridicule and jealous control than the non-sheltered women, which are the same variables that they found to correlate highly

with depression. Perhaps the reason that the present study did not produce similar results is because the participants were not as severely abused as women in the Sackett and Saunders (1999) study.

Indeed, most of the abuse victims in the present study were still with their abusive partner, whereas individuals in a shelter are obviously not. There is reason to believe that the explanation for why some individuals in psychologically abusive relations remain in them is because they may not fully appraise their partners' behaviour as abusive (Laner, 1990; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Thus, it was of interest to investigate how personal experience with abuse influenced appraisals of certain aspects of the dating conflict heard in the audio clip. It was also of interest to determine whether or not gender would moderate this relationship, especially since men and women may have different ideas of what kinds of behaviour are normal and/or what roles should be filled by each partner in a relationship (Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Gender and personal experiences of abuse did not interact to moderate the way that participants appraised the three audio clips. This was likely due to the fact that the level of abuse in the abusive male and abusive female clips was quite blatant. Thus, all male and female participants, whether they had been abused or not, appraised the situations in the abusive male clip and the abusive female clip as more serious than the situation in the no-abuse clip. There was, however, a weak interaction between gender, the amount of criticism experienced, and which clip was heard on how serious the situation in the audio clip was perceived to be such that when the female was abusive, men's ratings of the seriousness of the situation were somewhat lower when they had

experienced high levels of criticism, whereas women's ratings of how serious the conflict situation was did not differ based on the level of criticism experienced.

Thus, it seems that errors in appraisal of conflict behaviour may be associated with personal abuse experienced by men. Albeit speculative, it is possible that abused men come to believe that abusive behaviour is normal in a romantic relationship. Alternatively, it may be that because of the inability of some men to read signals properly and correctly interpret abusive actions, they are more likely to encounter abuse. Although women were not found to have similar appraisal discrepancies in the present study when it came to ratings of abusiveness, previous research has found that abused women may suffer from comparable appraisal inaccuracies (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

Not surprisingly, there were quite a few main effects related to the specific audio clip that was heard. The individual in the audio clip who was abusive was perceived as the most to blame for the conflict, and the victim was perceived as the least to blame, with the amount of blame assigned to the individuals in the no-abuse clip falling in the middle. Appraisals of how much the male was to blame when he was abusive were weakly moderated by the amount of abuse – specifically jealous control – that the participant had experienced such that higher abuse scores were associated with lower ratings of how much the male was to blame. This may further indicate desensitization or appraisal inaccuracies associated with personal abuse experiences.

Additionally, the abusive individual in the audio clip was rated as the most abusive and the victim of abuse was rated as the least abusive. The ratings of abusiveness of the individuals in the no-abuse clip fell in between. Among participants

who heard the no-abuse clip, higher levels jealous control victimization were associated with higher ratings of how abusive the male was. This seems to contradict the results previously discussed in that it seems to indicate a *sensitization* associated with personal abuse experiences rather than desensitization or feelings that abuse is acceptable.

Paradoxically, while abused individuals may not perceive an abusive situation as serious, and may not recognize an abusive individual as to blame for the situation, they do seem to recognize abusive behaviour as such, and may even interpret non-abusive conflict as abusive.

Finally, the abusive individual in the audio clip was rated as loving the victim significantly less than the victim was rated as loving the perpetrator. In addition, participants who reported experiencing higher levels of ignoring, ridicule, and fear of abuse were more likely to perceive the female as loving the male. It is possible that some aspect of the content of the audio clips may have lead participants to this conclusion; however, it is unknown why this might be the case only for participants who have experienced some forms of abuse in their own relationships.

In addition to evaluating the situation in the conflict, the participants in the present study also evaluated how positively they felt about the individual in the audio clip who was of their own gender. Participants who reported greater amounts of abuse – specifically jealous control, ignoring, and ridicule – evaluated the same gender character in the audio clip more positively than those who had experienced low levels of abuse. Not unexpectedly, the same-gender individual in the no abuse conflict was rated more positively than in both the abusive male conflict and the abusive female conflict. This is likely due to the fact that no participant would have a reason to rate the same-gender

individual in the no-abuse clip negatively, whereas participants rated the abusive individual who was of the same gender as them more negatively in comparison.

Limitations

Although the present investigation may have implications as to how psychological abuse in dating relationships affects men and women, this study has limitations that should be acknowledged.

Ultimately, every individual's dating experience is unique, and each person's interpretation of what is normal within a relationship may be different. It is difficult to determine whether the scale used in this study – the Profile of Psychological Abuse – accurately assessed the degree and type of abuse being experienced by each participant. It may be the case that individuals in dating relationships do not accurately assess their situations (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Matheson, Skomorovsky, Fiocco, & Anisman, 2007). Although the Profile of Psychological Abuse attempts to get around this problem by asking about types of incidents that may have occurred rather than directly asking if the participant believes that abuse has taken place, it is possible that appraisal problems may have influenced the accuracy of this scale. In addition, due to the retrospective design of this study, some data may have been lost or altered due to participants forgetting or not accurately remembering events.

It is also possible that men exhibit prominent symptoms other than depression associated with life stressors, such as addiction or alcoholism (e.g., Comer, 1992). Perhaps if other symptoms were measured, it would have been found that men experienced more of these symptoms than women.

Another factor that may have affected the accuracy of the interpretation of data is

that participants may have experienced other types of abuse or trauma in their lives, beyond what was experienced in their current or most recent dating relationship. It is possible that childhood abuse, abuse suffered in previous relationship, or abuse witnessed in one's family, as well as other types of trauma, may have affected participants' depressive symptoms and/or how participants reacted to the audio clips that they heard. The present study also did not take into consideration whether the participants had been *perpetrators* of abuse, which may have affected the way they interpreted the audio clips.

In addition, the subjects in this study were predominantly university students, along with individuals from the community for whom participation in this study was attractive. Essentially these participants represent a self-selected, and possibly biased sample, and hence these results cannot readily be generalized to other populations. It is also unknown whether similar results would be found when looking at abuse in same-sex dating relationships, since this study only investigated abuse in heterosexual relationships.

Conclusions

Despite the aforementioned caveats, findings from the present study shed light on the differential appraisals and relations to well being that exist between psychological dating abuse in men and women. This investigation demonstrated that the rates of dating abuse are similar for men and women and that, contrary to broad beliefs in the public, men even appear to be victims of more abuse than women. Despite this, however, women appear to suffer more depression in association with abuse.

The present findings also suggest that individuals may stay in abusive relationships because of an inability to properly assess their situations. Abused

individuals accurately recognized abuse when they witnessed it, and even perceived it in the non-abusive male, however abused men tended to not recognize a situation where a female was behaving abusively as serious, and both men and women who had experienced abuse downplayed how much blame was attributed to the abusive male for the relationship conflict.

From a therapeutic or intervention perspective, an important goal for future research might be to determine how to make abused individuals understand that they are in harmful situations so that they are able to escape. Another important research question concerns the long-term impact of abuse. Specifically, once one leaves an abusive relationship, do the consequences ever disappear? In fact, are these people more likely to get into a new abusive relationship because of their appraisal inaccuracies?

Although some differences between male and female abuse victims were found in the present investigation, certainly the subtleties between the genders still need to be further explored and the specific effects of abuse need to be clarified. Abusive relationships involve dynamic changes, and hence it will ultimately be necessary to conduct prospective studies that gauge these variations over time, rather than using a static measure that captures appraisals at a single point in time.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent has to provide sufficient information such that you have the opportunity to determine whether you wish to participate in the study.

Study Title: Appraisal of a conflict situation: who is at fault?

Study Personnel: Laura Ziebell (Researcher, 520-2600 ext. 7513)

Sarah Carolyn Wayne (Researcher, 520-2600 ext. 7513)

Dr. Hymie Anisman (Faculty Investigator, 520-2600 ext. 2699)

If you have any ethical concerns about how this study please contact: Dr. Avi Parush, Chair of Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, 613 520-2600 ext. 6026 or Dr. Janet Mantler, Chair of Dept. of Psychology, 613 520-2600 ext. 4173

Purpose and Task Requirements: The purpose of this study is to assess how experiences of stress and observed conflict between individuals influence physical and psychological health and well-being. We will be asking you to fill out a number of questionnaires regarding your personal characteristics and your psychological and physical health. Examples of these questions include “Do you take or use any recreational drugs such as cocaine; how many times in the past month?” and “Have you ever been in psychological therapy or counselling?” You will also be asked a variety of questions about experiences that you have had in your life, from childhood up until the present. Questions about your current or most recent dating relationship are included as well. You will then listen to an audio clip portraying a conflict, which you will be asked to evaluate. This will be followed by a few more questionnaires including questions about your current mood. The entire study will take approximately one hour to complete. You may complete the study in two separate sittings if you wish. The point at which you may stop and continue later will be specified when you reach it. For your participation in this study you will be awarded a \$10 gift certificate

Potential Risk and Discomfort: There are no physical risks in this study. There may be some emotional pain or discomfort when thinking about negative aspects of your past and present relationships, as well as emotional distress when listening to the audio. The audio content is meant to be realistic and includes swear words and coarse language that may be offensive to some participants.

Anonymity/Confidentiality: The data collected in this study will be kept confidential. Your informed consent form will be separated from your questionnaire responses and kept in a separate and secured file by one of the research investigators who will keep this

information confidential. It will be associated with a code, and only this code will identify your questionnaire.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. At any point during the study you have the right to not complete certain questions or to withdraw.

I have read the above description of the study. The data collected will be used in research publications and/or for teaching purposes. Clicking on "I agree", below, indicates that I agree to participate in the study, and this in no way constitutes a waiver of my rights.

Full Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Date:

Please click to confirm or deny that you agree:

Appendix B

Background Information

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Remember that you have the right to skip questions if you do not wish to answer them and that all information provided will be confidential.

Sex: Female / Male (please circle one)

Age: _____

Year of study: _____ 1st year; _____ 2nd year; _____ 3rd year; _____ 4th year

Current GPA: _____

Where do you currently live? (please check one)

_____ University residence

_____ Off campus housing shared with other student(s)

_____ Off campus housing by myself

_____ Off campus housing with a partner

_____ Off campus with family members (parents)

_____ Other (please describe _____)

What is your citizenship status?

_____ Canadian citizen

_____ Landed immigrant

Since what year? _____ Country of origin _____

_____ Student visa

Since what year? _____ Country of origin _____

What is your ethnic/racial background? _____

What is your religion, if any? _____

What is your relationship status? (please check the one that applies best to you)

_____ Single, and not seeing anyone

_____ Going out with someone

_____ Living with an intimate other

_____ Married

_____ Have recently broken up...

Please specify how many weeks ago you broke up _____

Please specify who initiated the break up:

_____ me _____ my partner _____ mutual decision

How long have/had you been in this relationship? _____ years

OR _____ months

If you are currently involved with someone,

Does the person live in Ottawa?

No _____ Yes _____ If no, where does (s)he live? _____

Prior to your current relationship, how many previous relationships have you had that you would describe as 'serious'? _____

Do you have children? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, how many? _____

Do you currently smoke? No _____ Yes _____

If yes, how many cigarettes/day? _____

Do you drink alcohol? No _____ Yes _____

If yes, how much alcohol do you drink on average? _____ drinks per day

OR _____ drinks per week

Do you take or use any recreational drugs? No _____ Yes _____

If yes, which drugs have you used in the past month? (check all that apply)

_____ Marijuana/hash; how many times in the past month? _____

_____ Ecstasy; how many times in the past month? _____

_____ Cocaine; how many times in the past month? _____

_____ Heroin; how many times in the past month? _____

_____ Other; please specify _____

how many times in the past month? _____

Have you ever been in psychological therapy or counselling? (please check the one that best applies to you)

_____ No, I have never been in therapy

_____ Yes, but I am no longer

_____ Yes, and still am

If yes, how long ago were you in, or have you been in therapy?

Began _____ month/year... and continued until _____ month/year

Are you currently being treated for any physical condition?

No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please specify _____

Are you on any of the following medications (please check all that apply)

_____ Birth control pill or other hormonal contraceptive (please specify) _____

_____ Anti-inflammatories (please specify) _____

_____ Anti-depressants (please specify) _____

_____ Anti-anxieties (please specify) _____

_____ Anti-histamines (please specify) _____

_____ Neuroleptics/Anti-psychotics (please specify) _____

_____ Other prescription drugs (please specify) _____

Appendix C

Profile of Psychological Abuse

We are interested in knowing about your interactions with your **current intimate partner**. *If you aren't in a romantic relationship with anyone at the moment, then please describe your experiences with your most recent partner within the past three months.* If you have never been in a romantic relationship, or it has been more than three months since your last relationship, please skip this questionnaire. Some of these questions may be hard to answer, but please try to be as accurate as possible, using the rating scale below. For each statement, please indicate how often your partner has behaved this way toward you **in the past 3 months** by writing a number in the space to the right of each statement using the following rating scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once	Twice	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	More than 10 times

In the past 3 months, how often has your partner:

1. ____ Become angry or upset if you wanted to be with someone else and not with him/her?
2. ____ Ignored your need for assistance when you were sick, tired, or over-worked?
3. ____ Told you that you were a horrible lover, worthless, or no good?
4. ____ After you'd done something, told you it wasn't right and asked you to do it over again until he/she decided it was done right?
5. ____ Made you feel guilty or ashamed for something you asked him/her to do?
6. ____ Intercepted your e-mail or telephone calls, or drilled you about who called you, who wrote you a message, or what you were talking about?
7. ____ Made the TV, a magazine, the newspaper, or other people seem more important than you?
8. ____ Ridiculed the traits you admire or value most in yourself?
9. ____ Inspected your work and made overly critical comments?
10. ____ Made you account for every minute you spent away from him/her?
11. ____ Become jealous about your friends, family or pets?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once	Twice	3 – 5 times	6 - 10 times	More than 10 times

In the past 3 months, how often has your partner:

12. ___ Complained or ridiculed you if you were upset or asked for emotional support?
13. ___ Checked up on you throughout the day? (called you every 15 minutes, had others tell her/him your whereabouts, etc.)
14. ___ Requested that everything be done in a precise way or it was be unacceptable?
15. ___ Threatened to hurt a prized possession, pets, friends, or relatives if you didn't comply with his/her wishes?
16. ___ Suggested that you were crazy or stupid?
17. ___ Yelled at you, either accusing you of having affairs or accusing you of other things?
18. ___ Made you feel you as if you were "walking on egg shells" when you were around her/him?
19. ___ Ignored your suggestion to have sex, or didn't do what excites or satisfies you?
20. ___ Called you names with sexual connotations (such as "slut", "whore" or "cunt" if you're female or "fairy", "faggot" or "homo" if you're male)?
21. ___ Ignored you when you began a conversation?
22. ___ Made fun of your triumphs, discouraged your plans, or minimized your successes?
23. ___ Asked for detailed reports of your hourly activities?

In the past 3 months, how often:

24. ___ Did you worry that what you do would make your partner angry?
25. ___ Did you do things your partner wanted you to do because you felt afraid?
26. ___ Did you fear that your partner would hit you if you didn't comply with his/her wishes?
27. ___ Did you try to second-guess how your partner would act?

Appendix D

Beck Depression Inventory

On this questionnaire are groups of statements. Please read the entire group of statements of each category. Then pick out ONE statement in that group which best describes the way you feel. Check off the number beside the statement you have chosen.

1. 0 = I do not feel sad
 1 = I feel sad or blue
 2a = I am blue or sad all of the time and I can't snap out of it
 2b = I am so sad or unhappy that it is very painful
 3 = I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it

2. 0 = I am not particularly pessimistic or discouraged about the future
 1 = I feel discouraged about the future
 2a = I feel I have nothing to look forward to
 2b = I feel I won't every get over my troubles
 3 = I feel that the future is hopeless and things cannot improve

3. 0 = I do not feel like a failure
 1 = I feel I have failed more than the average person
 2a = I feel I have accomplished very little that is worthwhile or that means anything
 2b = As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures
 3 = I feel I am a complete failure as a person

4. 0 = I am not particularly dissatisfied
 1a = I feel bored most of the time
 1b = I don't enjoy things the way I used to
 2 = I don't get satisfaction out of anything anymore
 3 = I am dissatisfied with everything

5. 0 = I don't feel particularly guilty
 1 = I feel bad or unworthy a good part of the time
 2a = I feel quite guilty
 2b = I feel bad or unworthy practically of the time now
 3 = I feel as though I am very bad or worthless

6. 0 = I don't feel I am being punished
 1 = I have a feeling that something bad may happen to me
 2 = I feel I am being punished or will be punished
 3a = I feel I deserve to be punished
 3b = I want to be punished

7. ___ 0 = I don't feel disappointed in myself
 ___ 1a = I am disappointed in myself
 ___ 1b = I don't like myself
 ___ 2 = I am disgusted with myself
 ___ 3 = I hate myself
8. ___ 0 = I do not feel I am any worse than anybody else
 ___ 1 = I am very critical of myself for my weaknesses or mistakes
 ___ 2a = I blame myself for everything that goes wrong
 ___ 2b = I feel I have many bad faults
9. ___ 0 = I don't have thoughts of harming myself
 ___ 1 = I have thoughts of harming myself but I would not carry them out
 ___ 2a = I feel I would be better off dead
 ___ 2b = I have definite plans about committing suicide
 ___ 2c = I feel my family would be better off if I were dead
 ___ 3 = I would kill myself if I could
10. ___ 0 = I don't cry anymore than usual
 ___ 1 = I cry more now than I used to
 ___ 2 = I cry all the time now. I can't stop it
 ___ 3 = I used to be able to cry but now I can't cry at all even though I want to
11. ___ 0 = I am no more irritated now than I ever am
 ___ 1 = I get annoyed or irritated more easily than I used to
 ___ 2 = I get irritated all the time
 ___ 3 = I don't get irritated at all the things that used to irritate me.
12. ___ 0 = I have not lost interest in other people
 ___ 1 = I am less interested in other people than I used to be
 ___ 2 = I have lost most of my interest in other people and I have little feeling for them
 ___ 3 = I have lost all my interest in other people and don't care about them at all
13. ___ 0 = I make decisions about as well as ever
 ___ 1 = I am less sure of myself now and try to put off making decisions
 ___ 2 = I can't make decisions anymore without help
 ___ 3 = I can't make decisions at all anymore
14. ___ 0 = I don't feel I look any worse than I used to
 ___ 1 = I am worried that I am looking old or unattractive
 ___ 2 = I feel that there permanent changes in my appearance and they make me
 look unattractive
 ___ 3 = I feel that I am ugly or repulsive looking

15. ___ 0 = I can work about as well as before
___ 1a = It takes extra effort to get started at doing something
___ 1b = I don't work as well as I used to
___ 2 = I have to push myself very hard to do anything
___ 3 = I can't do any work at all
16. ___ 0 = I can sleep as well as usual
___ 1 = I wake up more tired in the morning than I used to
___ 2 = I wake up 1-2 hours earlier than usual and find it hard to get back to sleep
___ 3 = I wake up early every day and can't get more than 5 hours sleep
17. ___ 0 = I don't get anymore tired than usual
___ 1 = I get tired more easily than I used to
___ 2 = I get tired from doing anything
___ 3 = I get too tired to do anything
18. ___ 0 = My appetite is no worse than usual
___ 1 = My appetite is not as good as it used to be
___ 2 = My appetite is much worse now
___ 3 = I have no appetite at all any more
19. ___ 0 = I haven't lost much weight, if any, lately
___ 1 = I have lost more than 5 pounds
___ 2 = I have lost more than 10 pounds
___ 3 = I have lost more than 15 pounds
20. ___ 0 = I am no more concerned about my health than usual
___ 1 = I am concerned about aches and pains or upset stomach or constipation or other unpleasant feelings in my body
___ 2 = I am so concerned with how I feel or what I feel that it's hard to think of much else
___ 3 = I am completely absorbed in what I feel
22. ___ 0 = I have not noticed any recent change in my interest in sex
___ 1 = I am less interested in sex than I used to be
___ 2 = I am much less interested in sex now
___ 3 = I have lost interest in sex completely

Appendix E
Scripts of Conflicts

No Abuse Conflict

Counsellor: Ok, what we need to be able to do to understand what led you two to come see me is to work through how you deal with conflict. You mentioned that you had an argument yesterday, and so I'd like you to re-enact to the best of your ability what happened in that argument. Try to pretend I'm not here. Then just start from, say, when Dave got home yesterday and came in. Do you have any questions?

Both indicate no.

Ok, let's get started.

[1] MALE: Hey, how's it going?

[2] FEMALE: Umm...ok I guess. I've just been doing my readings all day...nothing too exciting. How about you?

[3] MALE: Pretty good. I met up with the study group after Psych today, and we talked to the TA about out how to write up the lab report. So, now I don't have to worry about spending the weekend trying to get that sorted out.

[4] FEMALE: Good. Oh, by the way, Eric called and he wants you to give him a call back.

[5] MALE: Yeah...he left a message on my cell too. Thanks though. He and that girl he's been dating broke up.

[6] FEMALE: Really? Why?...it seemed like he really liked her.

[7] MALE: Yeah...I guess they were just talking one night and she mentioned that she got a part-time job at the Royal Oak, and so she would be pretty busy in the evenings. That meant they weren't going to see much of each other, because she'd need her weekends to study. He figured this was really just her way of telling him to take a hike.

[8] FEMALE: That's too bad.... if he's right, better that he end it now then after he's had time to really fall for her. Hope he's ok.

[9] MALE: Yeah, me too. Hey, but guess what? He's trying to get all the guys together to out for a pub crawl next Friday. He wanted to know if I was up for it.

[10] FEMALE: So...what did you tell him?

[11] MALE: I said that he could count me in. I haven't hung out with the guys in a long time, so it should be a lot of fun. My Law exam is on Friday morning, and I don't have any papers due on Monday, so it'll be great to have a bash and not feel stressed about having to sleep it off on Saturday.

[12] FEMALE: Oh. (pause). [SOUNDING UNCERTAIN] I hope you have fun. It will be good for you to have a break. (pause) Are Adam and Jeff going to be there?

[13] MALE: Yeah probably. What's wrong – you sound a bit upset.

[14] FEMALE: No, I'm ok. [pause]. Really, it's fine. [pause] I'm sorry, but Dave... you know I don't like those guys...their jerks! You remember what happened last time we went out with them. It was nearly the end of our relationship. Adam couldn't keep his hands to himself. It was totally humiliating.

[15] MALE: Well...they've been my friends since we were kids...that's just how they are. And I told him to lay off and leave you alone!

[16] FEMALE: Sure, you did. And he just laughed at you... nothing you said changed anything.

[17] MALE: Well you don't have to worry this time, because you won't be there this time. It's just the guys.

THEY BOTH SOUND INCREASINGLY UPSET, BUT NOT YELLING OR ANGRY.

[18] FEMALE: Yeah, I know. I'll end up spending the night worrying though. We both know what happens when you guys get together. You'll be drunk before midnight, and then all of you suddenly forget what it means to be decent. When Adam and Jeff are around, there's always trouble!

[19] MALE: Relax, it'll be fine. We're not going to do anything stupid. Eric just wants to get away with the guys and forget about that girl.

[20] FEMALE: Forget about that girl? Sorry, but what exactly does that mean? With those guys, you'll drink yourselves into oblivion, and then you forget yourselves. This all just turns into an excuse for you guys to go out and get laid! And of course, it's not your fault, you didn't mean it, because you were drunk.

[21] MALE: What!? Where is this coming from? All this is, is a chance to get out with friends who I haven't seen in a long time... to catch up and have some good times. This is NOT some excuse to go picking up girls. Since when do I do that anyway? If case you haven't noticed, we've been together for 2 years and we're living together. I'm not exactly on the market. Plus, how is this any different from when you and all the girls get dressed up and go out dancing? You don't think I know that guys try to pick you girls up at the bars? And admit it, you have fun placing bets on which guy will dance with you?

[22] FEMALE: Well, yeah, but it's not like I do anything. And dancing is hardly about hoping to get laid. And anyway, you know I prefer going out with you instead. But in the end, it's only us girls who are interested in dancing instead of just sitting around drinking.

[23] MALE: Oh come on.... what about all the free drinks you girls get? You don't think I don't hear you girls laughing about how you didn't have to pay for anything all night?

[24] FEMALE: That's different – we're just joking around. It's not like I have to go home with the guy just because he bought me a drink. Besides, you know that I only have one drink and then switch to pop. I make sure that when you're not there I stay sober so that I can take care of myself.

[25] MALE: Well, good thing I'm secure enough to believe you. Too bad you can't do the same for me. I'm going out with the guys, whether you like it or not. Hopefully, you'll realize you can trust me.

[26] FEMALE: Do whatever you like. I only wish you and Eric could do something else to help him forget that didn't leave me feeling so worried about what's happening.

[27] MALE: You know, you say things like this, and I know you're just trying to make me feel guilty. If I didn't go now, this would be just one more thing that you end up controlling in our relationship. You know I don't care if you pick out what movie we go to see, what kind of food we buy, what we decorate the living room with, or whatever else you wanna do. But this is about you controlling who I'm "allowed" to hang out with, and what I can do for fun!

[28] FEMALE: Well, it's not like you even try to help with those kinds of decisions around here! When I ask you what you want to watch or eat you just say "I don't care, whatever you're in the mood for". So what do you want me to do? Sit on the couch waiting for you to make a decision? I'm not controlling, I'm just the one who actually takes care of things around here. If it wasn't for me we'd be sitting here on the floor in a white room watching the TV guide channel with take out menus in front of us still trying to figure out what we wanted to eat every night!

[29] MALE: So now... I'm some moron who doesn't know how to do anything for himself – right! If you want to talk about your great ability to make decisions, why don't we talk about the living room! Yeah, you can make a decision, but you always seem to pick the most expensive option! Do we really need a leather couch, and all those knickknacks and candles everywhere? We're still students for goodness sake! It's not like we have money to just throw out the window!

[30] FEMALE: Well you sure seem to like the leather couch - you never objected when I picked it out. And you sure do spend a whole lot of time sitting around on it watching TV. And, as for

the “knickknacks”, they’re from Ikea and were super cheap. I didn’t spend any more on them in total than you spent on that X-Box game last month.

[31] MALE: I bought one game all month. That’s nothing compared to all the clothes that you come home with after your weekend shopping sprees. Every week, the only way you can find to ‘destress’ and ‘get some balance in your life’, is to spend money buying clothes. Can’t you just go for a walk around the block?

[32] FEMALE: Every week?! I treat myself to one or two things a month!

[33] MALE: Still, do you really need them? You only wear most of what you have a few times and then decide it’s out of style. You’ve stuffed the closet with things you never wear. Talk about wasting money.

[34] FEMALE: Wasting money? So... your night out drinking ... it lasts one night and you have a hangover the next day. If that isn’t wasting money!? Dave...you’re always spending way too much money on things that don’t last and have no benefit. And then when it comes time to pay the bills, you’re always short with your half. What if we really were both as careless with money as you are. We’d be out on the street.

[35] MALE: I’m not careless...that only happened twice. Besides, I’d be spending pretty much the same amount of money if I didn’t go – no doubt you’d be wanting to go out for dinner and a movie, if I didn’t have something else to do. You always do that. As soon as I have a break, you want to fill it up doing things together.

[36] FEMALE: Which reminds me, we were supposed to go to my parent’s house for dinner on Saturday night. I hope you worked that into your plans. And it’s my dad’s birthday so we can’t skip out, and you can count on my mom expecting you to eat a big meal.

[37] MALE: Anne...you told me that those plans weren’t definite. Your mom hadn’t decided whether to do it this week or next week because your dad might be on a business trip. Anyway, it’s not like you couldn’t go without me. You know I dread visiting with your parents. Your dad treats me like I’m a loser, and your mom always seems out of it. We’d just be sitting there talking about how Mrs. Smith down the street has haemorrhoids, or if your dad’s in a really good mood he’ll tell us all about his most recent big contract, complete with the technical details. Then he’ll ask me again what someone with a degree in English can do. I need a break...the last thing I feel like is being at your parents trying to pretend that I’m enjoying myself.

[38] FEMALE: So you’d rather listen to Eric moan and groan about some girl who’s dumped him. And you tell me I’m supposed to be ok with you going out with Adam and Jeff cause they’re your friends, and that’s just the way they are. Well these are my parents. And, whether we like it or not, that’s just the way they are.

[39] MALE: Fine, but we both know they can’t stand me. And they’d probably be a lot happier if you went without me, just like I’m going out without you.

[40] FEMALE: Fine. Again, do whatever you want. In fact, why don’t you stay the night at one of their places, so I don’t have to listen to you coming in drunk and stinking like a bar, and listen to you moaning and groaning all morning about your head and your stomach.

[41] MALE: Oh, that’s really nice. The only time I get together with my friends and you can’t handle it. That’s support for you. And then you’re surprised when I don’t feel like dealing with your family.

[42] FEMALE: I can’t believe this. I need to get of here – I can’t handle talking to you right now. I’m going for a walk, I’ll be back later.

[43] MALE: Yeah.... whatever...we’ll talk about it later.

[44] Counsellor: Ok, very good. Thanks both of you. This is a good place to stop.

Male Abuser Conflict

Counsellor: Ok, what we need to be able to do to understand what led you two to come see me is to work through how you deal with conflict. You mentioned that you had an argument yesterday, and so I'd like you to re-enact to the best of your ability what happened in that argument. Try to pretend I'm not here. Then just start from, say, when Dave got home yesterday and came in. Do you have any questions?

Both indicate no.

Ok, let's get started.

[1] MALE: Hey, how's it going?

[2] FEMALE: Umm...ok I guess. I've just been doing my readings all day...nothing too exciting. How about you?

[3] MALE: Pretty good. I met up with the study group after Psych today, and we talked to the TA about out how to write up the lab report. So, now I don't have to worry about spending the weekend trying to get that sorted out.

[4] FEMALE: Good. Oh, by the way, Eric called and he wants you to give him a call back.

[5] MALE: Yeah...he left a message my cell too. Thanks though. He and that girl he's been dating broke up.

[6] FEMALE: Really? Why?...it seemed like he really liked her.

[7] MALE: Yeah...I guess they were just talking one night and she mentioned that she got a part-time job at the Royal Oak, and so she would be pretty busy in the evenings. That meant they weren't going to see much of each other, because she'd need her weekends to study. He figured this was really just her way of telling him to take a hike.

[8] FEMALE: That's too bad.... if he's right, better that he end it now then after he's had time to really fall for her. Hope he's ok.

[9] MALE: Yeah, me too. Hey, but guess what? He's trying to get all the guys together to out for a pub crawl next Friday. He wanted to know if I was up for it.

[10] FEMALE: So...what did you tell him?

[11] MALE: I said that he could count me in. I haven't hung out with the guys in a long time, so it should be a lot of fun. My Law exam is on Friday morning, and I don't have any papers due on Monday, so it'll be great to have a bash and not feel stressed about having to sleep it off on Saturday.

[12] FEMALE: Oh. (pause). [SOUNDING UNCERTAIN] I hope you have fun. It will be good for you to have a break. (pause) Are Adam and Jeff going to be there?

[13] MALE: Yeah probably. What's wrong – you sound a bit upset.

[14] FEMALE: No, I'm ok. [pause]. Really, it's fine. [pause] I'm sorry, but Dave... you know I don't like those guys...their jerks! You remember what happened last time we went out with them. It was nearly the end of our relationship. Adam couldn't keep his hands to himself. It was totally humiliating.

[15] MALE: Well...they've been my friends since we were kids....that's just how they are. And I told him to lay off and leave you alone!

[16] FEMALE: Sure, you did. And he just laughed at you... nothing you said changed anything.

[17] MALE: Well you don't have to worry this time, because you won't be there this time. It's just the guys.

SHE SOUNDS INCREASINGLY UPSET, BUT NOT YELLING OR ANGRY – MORE QUIET. HE BECOMES INCREASINGLY SARCASTIC AND COLD

[18] FEMALE: Yeah, I know. I'll end up spending the night worrying though. We both know what happens when you guys get together. You'll be drunk before midnight, and then all of you

suddenly forget what it means to be decent. When Adam and Jeff are around, there's always trouble!

[19] MALE: Relax, it'll be fine. We're not going to do anything stupid. Eric just wants to get away with the guys and forget about that girl.

[20] FEMALE: Forget about that girl? Sorry, but what exactly does that mean? With those guys, you'll drink yourselves into oblivion, and then you forget yourselves. This all just turns into an excuse for you guys to go out and get laid! And of course, it's not your fault, you didn't mean it, because you were drunk.

[21] MALE: What!? Where is this coming from? All this is, is a chance to get out with friends who I haven't seen in a long time... to catch up and have some good times. This is NOT some excuse to go picking up girls. Since when do I do that anyway? If case you haven't noticed, **I've been stuck with you for 2 years and you even managed to convince me to move in together. You got what you wanted.** Plus, how is this any different from when you and all the girls get dressed up and go out dancing? You don't think I know that guys try to pick you girls up at the bars? And admit it, **you're just drooling with hope that some guy would even want to look at you?**

[22] FEMALE: Well, yeah, but it's not like I do anything. And dancing is hardly about hoping to get laid. And anyway, you know I prefer going out with you instead. But in the end, it's only us girls who are interested in dancing instead of just sitting around drinking.

[23] MALE: Oh come on... what about all the free drinks you girls get? You don't think I don't hear you **and those sluts** laughing about how you didn't have to pay for anything all night?

[24] FEMALE: That's different – we're just joking around. It's not like I have to go home with the guy just because he bought me a drink. Besides, you know that I only have one drink and then switch to pop. I make sure that when you're not there I stay sober so that I can take care of myself.

[25] MALE: Well, it's not like I see guys crowding around you anyway. So I'm going out with the guys, whether you like it or not. No doubt you'll be calling your mommy to whine and complain.

[26] FEMALE: Do whatever you like. I only wish you and Eric could do something else to help him forget that didn't leave me feeling so worried about what's happening.

[27] MALE: You know, **you are such a loser.** If I didn't go now, this would be just one more thing that you end up controlling in our relationship. You know I don't care if you pick out what movie we go to see, what kind of food we buy, what we decorate the living room with, or whatever else you wanna do. But this is about you controlling who I'm "allowed" to hang out with, and what I can do for fun!

[28] FEMALE: Well, it's not like you even try to help with those kinds of decisions around here! When I ask you what you want to watch or eat you just say "I don't care, whatever you're in the mood for". So what do you want me to do? Sit on the couch waiting for you to make a decision? I'm not controlling, I'm just the one who actually takes care of things around here. If it wasn't for me we'd be sitting here on the floor in a white room watching the TV guide channel with take out menus in front of us still trying to figure out what we wanted to eat every night!

[29] MALE: **Who the hell do you think you are making me out to be some moron who doesn't know how to do anything for himself!** If you want to talk about your great ability to make decisions, why don't we talk about the living room! Yeah, you can make a decision. **All you do is look at the price tag and choose the biggest one!** Do we really need a leather couch, and all those **stupid** knickknacks and candles everywhere? **You act like you're royalty!**

[30] FEMALE: Well you sure seem to like the leather couch - you never objected when I picked it out. And you sure do spend a whole lot of time sitting around on it watching TV. And, as for the "knickknacks", they're from Ikea and were super cheap. I didn't spend any more on them in total than you spent on that X-Box game last month.

ALTHOUGH STANDING UP FOR HERSELF, SHE REMAINS FAIRLY QUIET. HE HAS BECOME VERY ANGRY AND SARCASTIC.

[31] MALE: I bought one game all month! **What else was I supposed to do – sit around and listen to you gabber on?** And anyway, that's nothing compared to all the clothes that you come home with after your weekend shopping sprees! **Why do you think I've cut how much money you can have each month.** Every week, the only way you can find to 'destress' and 'get some balance in your life', is to spend money buying clothes. Can't you just go for a walk around the block? **You could use the exercise.**

[32] FEMALE: Every week?! I treat myself to one or two things a month!

[33] MALE: Still, do you really need them? **You keep buying this stuff that's too small thinking you'll lose weight, but you haven't yet stuck to a diet.** You've stuffed the closet with things you never wear. Talk about wasting money. **Thank god you don't have direct access to our account.**

[34] FEMALE: Wasting money?! So... your night out drinking ... it lasts one night and you have a hangover the next day. If that isn't wasting money!? Dave...you're always spending way too much money on things that don't last and have no benefit. And then when it comes time to pay the bills, we're always short. What if I spent money the same way you do. We'd be out on the street.

[35] MALE: **You're a goddamn liar.** Besides, I'd be spending the same amount of money if I didn't go – what with you always wanting to go out for dinner and a movie. You always do that. As soon as I have a break, you want to fill it up doing things together.. **But until you lose some of that fat, it's too embarrassing sometimes to be seen in public with you. You're starting to look like your mother.**

[36] FEMALE: Which reminds me, we were supposed to go to my parent's house for dinner on Saturday night. I hope you worked that into your plans. And it's my dad's birthday so we can't skip out, and you can count on my mom expecting you to eat a big meal.

[37] MALE: **Oh crap – I don't need anymore of this shit.** I thought your mom hadn't decided whether to do it this week or next week because your dad might be on a business trip. **Anyway, I don't give a shit what they think, we're not going.** You know I hate visiting with your parents. Your father treats me like I'm a loser, and your mother is a tool. We'd just be sitting there talking about how Mrs. Smith down the street has haemorrhoids, or if your father's in a really good mood he'll tell us all about his most recent big contract, complete with the technical details. Then he'll ask me again what someone with a degree in English can do. **No way, I'm not wasting my time sitting around with your parents. And you're not going either. You get too weird when I let you visit your parents alone. So you can just call them and just say I'm sick and so we can't go.**

[38] FEMALE: So you can listen to Eric moan and groan about some girl who's dumped him. And you tell me I'm supposed to be ok with you going out with Adam and Jeff cause they're your friends, and that's just the way they are. Well these are my parents. And, whether we like it or not, that's just the way they are.

[39] MALE: **I don't give a goddamn! And if you don't shut you're mouth about it, I'll call and tell them exactly what I think of them and their slut of a daughter!**

[40] FEMALE: Fine. Again, do whatever you want. In fact, why don't you stay the night at one of their places, so I don't have to listen to you coming in drunk and stinking like a bar, and listen to you moaning and groaning all morning about your head and your stomach.

[41] MALE: **Oh, that's really nice. So now you're trying to keep me out, probably so you can invite over that little creep you've been doing your Biology labs with. And don't give me that look ... I've seen the look on your face when you talk about him. If I ever see him in this house, you'll be sorry you ever lived!!!!**

[42] FEMALE: I can't believe this. I need to get of here – I can't handle talking to you right now. I'm going for a walk, I'll be back later.

[43] MALE: **Yeah – then take your cell. I want to make sure you're not over drooling over bio-creep.**

[44] Counsellor: Ok, ok. Thanks both of you. This is a good place to stop.

Female Abuser Conflict

Counsellor: Ok, what we need to be able to do to understand what led you two to come see me is to work through how you deal with conflict. You mentioned that you had an argument yesterday, and so I'd like you to re-enact to the best of your ability what happened in that argument. Try to pretend I'm not here. Then just start from, say, when Dave got home yesterday and came in. Do you have any questions?

Both indicate no.

Ok, let's get started.

[1] MALE: Hey, how's it going?

[2] FEMALE: Umm...ok I guess. I've just been doing my readings all day....nothing too exciting. How about you?

[3] MALE: Pretty good. I met up with the study group after Psych today, and we talked to the TA about out how to write up the lab report. So, now I don't have to worry about spending the weekend trying to get that sorted out.

[4] FEMALE: Good. Oh, by the way, Eric called and he wants you to give him a call back.

[5] MALE: Yeah...he left a message my cell too. Thanks though. He and that girl he's been dating broke up.

[6] FEMALE: Really? Why?...it seemed like he really liked her.

[7] MALE: Yeah...I guess they were just talking one night and she mentioned that she got a part-time job at the Royal Oak, and so she would be pretty busy in the evenings. That meant they weren't going to see much of each other, because she'd need her weekends to study. He figured this was really just her way of telling him to take a hike.

[8] FEMALE: That's too bad.... if he's right, better that he end it now then after he's had time to really fall for her. Hope he's ok.

[9] MALE: Yeah, me too. Hey, but guess what? He's trying to get all the guys together to out for a pub crawl next Friday. He wanted to know if I was up for it.

[10] FEMALE: So...what did you tell him?

[11] MALE: I said that he could count me in. I haven't hung out with the guys in a long time, so it should be a lot of fun. My Law exam is on Friday morning, and I don't have any papers due on Monday, so it'll be great to have a bash and not feel stressed about having to sleep it off on Saturday.

[12] FEMALE: Oh. (pause). [SOUNDING UNCERTAIN] I hope you have fun. It will be good for you to have a break. (pause) Are Adam and Jeff going to be there?

[13] MALE: Yeah probably. What's wrong – you sound a bit upset.

[14] FEMALE: No, I'm ok. [pause]. Really, it's fine. [pause] I'm sorry, but Dave... you know I don't like those guys...their jerks! You remember what happened last time we went out with them. It was nearly the end of our relationship. Adam couldn't keep his hands to himself. It was totally humiliating.

[15] MALE: Well...they've been my friends since we were kids....that's just how they are. And I told him to lay off and leave you alone!

[16] FEMALE: Sure, you did. And he just laughed at you... nothing you said changed anything.

[17] MALE: Well you don't have to worry this time, because you won't be there this time. It's just the guys.

HE BECOMES INCREASINGLY QUIET AND EMOTIONLESS, WHEREAS SHE BECOMES SARCASTIC AND COLD.

[18] FEMALE: Yeah, I know. I'll end up spending the night worrying though. We both know what happens when you guys get together. You'll be drunk before midnight, and then all of you suddenly forget what it means to be decent. When Adam and Jeff are around, there's always trouble!

[19] MALE: Relax, it'll be fine. We're not going to do anything stupid. Eric just wants to get away with the guys and forget about that girl.

[20] FEMALE: Forget about that girl? Sorry, but what exactly does that mean? With those guys, you'll drink yourselves into oblivion, and then you forget yourselves. This all just turns into an excuse for you guys to go out and get laid! **Well you might as well save yourself the energy – you have a hard time getting it up at the best of times.**

[21] MALE: What!? Where is this coming from? All this is, is a chance to get out with friends who I haven't seen in a long time... to catch up and have some good times. This is NOT some excuse to go picking up girls. Since when do I do that anyway? If case you haven't noticed, we've been together for 2 years and we're living together. I'm not exactly on the market. Plus, how is this any different from when you and all the girls get dressed up and go out dancing? You don't think I know that guys try to pick you girls up at the bars? And admit it, you have fun placing bets on which guy will dance with you?

[22] FEMALE: Well, yeah, but it's not like I can help being flattered by a man showing some interest in me. And dancing is hardly getting laid. Besides if you weren't such a clutz, then I'd go out with you instead. But in the end, it's only us girls who are interested in dancing instead of just sitting around drinking.

[23] MALE: Oh come on.... what about all the free drinks you girls get? You don't think I don't hear you girls laughing about how you didn't have to pay for anything all night?

[24] FEMALE: That's different – we're just joking around. It's not like I have to go home with the guy just because he bought me a drink. **Nothing wrong with having someone to dance with, and if that means having a little fun together while I'm at it, what the hell.** Besides, you know that I only have one drink and then switch to pop **so even if there's some chemistry between us, it's harmless.** I make sure I stay sober so that I can take care of myself.

[25] MALE: Well, good thing I'm secure enough to believe you. Too bad you can't do the same for me. I'm going out with the guys, whether you like it or not. Hopefully, you'll realize you can trust me.

[26] FEMALE: **Do whatever you like. I just can't believe your still gonna go, even after knowing that I don't want you to! Are you starting to get it on with Eric now? Is that what this is about?**

[27] MALE: You know, you say things like this, and I know you're just trying to make me feel guilty. If I didn't go now, this would be just one more thing that you end up controlling in our relationship. You know I don't care if you pick out what movie we go to see, what kind of food we buy, what we decorate the living room with, or whatever else you wanna do. But this is about you controlling who I'm "allowed" to hang out with, and what I can do for fun!

[28] FEMALE: Well, it's not like you even try to help with those kinds of decisions around here! When I ask you what you want to watch or eat you just say "I don't care, whatever you're in the mood for". So what do you want me to do? Sit on the couch waiting for you to make a decision? I'm not controlling, **I'm just the only one around here who's smart enough to actually make a decision.** If it wasn't for me we'd be sitting here on the floor in a white room watching the TV

guide channel with take out menus in front of us still trying to figure out what we wanted to eat every night!

[29] MALE: So now... I'm some moron who doesn't know how to do anything for himself – right! If you want to talk about your great ability to make decisions, why don't we talk about the living room! Yeah, you can make a decision, but you always seem to pick the most expensive option! Do we really need a leather couch, and all those knickknacks and candles everywhere? We're still students for goodness sake! It's not like we have money to just throw out the window!

[30] FEMALE: Well you sure seem to like the leather couch – and you were there when we bought it. Maybe, when we chose it you were too dumb to realize that we'd also have to pay for it. But now you sure do spend a whole lot of time parking your ass on it watching TV! No wonder you've turned into such a fat slob. And, as for the "knickknacks", they're from Ikea and were super cheap. I didn't spend any more on them in total than you spent on that stupid X-Box game last month.

SHE HAS BECOME VERY ANGRY, HOSTILE AND SARCASTIC. HE REMAINS FAIRLY QUIET AND FLAT.

[31] MALE: I bought one game all month. That's nothing compared to all the clothes that you come home with after your weekend shopping sprees. Every week, the only way you can find to 'de-stress' and 'get some balance in your life', is to spend money buying clothes. Can't you just go for a walk around the block?

[32] FEMALE: Every week?! You are such a liar! I treat myself to one or two things a month! Besides, I have to do something to get out of this hell-hole!

[33] MALE: Still, do you really need them? You only wear most of what you have a few times and then decide it's out of style. You've stuffed the closet with things you never wear. Talk about wasting money.

[34] FEMALE: Wasting money?! So... your night out drinking ... it lasts one night and you have a hangover the next day. If that isn't wasting money!? Dave...you're always spending way too much money on things that don't last and have no benefit. And then when it comes time to pay the bills, you're always short with your half. **Thank god I always have at least one other guy around who can take me out once in awhile and buy me things to help me out financially. At least I know I'm not going to end up out on the street.**

[35] MALE: I'm not careless...that only happened twice. Besides, I'd be spending pretty much the same amount of money if I didn't go – no doubt you'd be wanting to go out for dinner and a movie, if I didn't have something else to do. You always do that. As soon as I have a break, you want to fill it up doing things together.

[36] FEMALE: **You wish! You're too goddamn boring to do anything with.** But that reminds me, we were supposed to go to my parent's house for dinner on Saturday night. I hope you worked that into your hangover plans. And it's my dad's birthday so we can't skip out, and you can count on my mom expecting you to eat a big meal. **So I don't give a shit how sick you feel, you'd better eat. Not that you need the extra calories.**

[37] MALE: Anne...you told me that those plans weren't definite. Your mom hadn't decided whether to do it this week or next week because your dad might be on a business trip. Anyway, it's not like you couldn't go without me. You know I dread visiting with your parents. Your dad treats me like I'm a loser, and your mom always seems out of it. We'd just be sitting there talking about how Mrs. Smith down the street has haemorrhoids, or if your dad's in a really good mood he'll tell us all about his most recent big contract, complete with the technical details. Then he'll ask me again what someone with a degree in English can do. I need a break.... the last thing I feel like is being at your parents trying to pretend that I'm enjoying myself.

[38] FEMALE: So you'd rather listen to **your pathetic little friend** Eric moan and groan about some girl who's dumped him. And you tell me I'm supposed to be ok with you going out with

Adam and Jeff cause they're your friends, and that's just the way they are. Well these are my parents. And, whether you like it or not, that's just the way they are. **So I'm not interested in your whining, you're coming with me. And I expect you to be in your best form. Otherwise, next time we're at your parents, I'll let them know just what a pathetic little moron they're homo son has turned into.**

[39] MALE: Fine, but we both know your parents can't stand me. And they'd probably be a lot happier if you went without me, just like I'm going out without you.

[40] FEMALE: Fine –go with your **other homo** friends! In fact, why don't you stay the night at one of their places, so I don't have to listen to you coming in drunk and stinking like a bar. **Maybe you'll get AIDS, and I'll have an excuse not to have to put up with your pathetic attempts to have sex with me anymore.**

[41] MALE: Oh, that's really nice. The only time I get together with my friends and you can't handle it. That's support for you. And then you're surprised when I don't feel like dealing with your family.

[42] FEMALE: You're such an asshole! I'm getting out of here – I can't handle listening to your whiney little voice anymore. I'm going for a walk, I'll be back later. And maybe along the way, I'll stop and see who's at the bar – better than coming back to you.

[43] MALE: Yeah... whatever...we'll talk about it later.

[44] Counsellor: Ok, ok good. Thanks both of you. This is a good place to stop.

Appendix F

Appraisal of Conflict Questionnaire

In response to what you've heard so far, please answer the questions that follow as best you can.

1. How serious do you think the conflict between these two is so far?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely serious
2. How likely is it that this conflict will get worse?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely likely
3. Do you think that the **woman** in the scenario is to blame for the any conflict in the discussion so far?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely her fault
4. Do you think that the **man** in the scenario is to blame for the any conflict in the discussion so far?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely his fault
5. Would you describe **the woman's behaviour** as psychologically or emotionally abusive towards her partner?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely abusive
6. Would you describe **the man's behaviour** as psychologically or emotionally abusive towards his partner?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely abusive
7. Was this an experience **the woman** could have avoided if she'd taken more control, or was it out of her hands entirely?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely could have avoided it
 in her control
8. Was this an experience **the man** could have avoided if he'd taken more control, or was it out of his hands entirely?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Definitely could have avoided it
 in his control
9. To what extent do you think that the **woman** in the scenario really loves her partner?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely
10. To what extent do you think that the **man** in the scenario really loves his partner?
 Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely

Appendix G

Evaluation of the Same-Gender Speaker

I find the person in the audio-tape who is the same gender as me to be...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
unintelligent						intelligent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
immoral						moral

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
bad						good

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
incompetent						competent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
uninformed						knowledgeable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
confused						logical

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
unlikeable						likeable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
emotional						rational

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
biased						unbiased

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
defensive						offensive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
closed-minded						open-minded

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
cold						warm

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
arrogant						modest

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
dissimilar to me						similar to me

Appendix H

Debriefing

In this study we were interested in assessing individuals' ratings of a conflict situation between dating partners when verbal psychological abuse was either present or was not present. Psychological abuse renders a victim emotionally insecure about their own self-worth and often causes them to become helpless against further psychological abuse or other forms of abuse, leaving feelings of hurt, anger, fear and degradation. We aimed to determine if your past experience in dating relationships influenced your ratings of the conflict. Different types of potential outcomes were envisaged. One such outcome is known as the "Black Sheep Effect" in which individuals of a group criticize more harshly poorly behaving members of the same group. Another possible outcome is that individuals who have experienced abuse in their own relationships may be more acutely aware of subtle signs of abuse in a conflict situation. We also wanted to identify how experiences of relational stress and relational power (being dominant or not in your own relationships) you have experienced, and observing a conflict between individuals influenced your psychological well-being and feelings of distress.

As well, life stressors can lead to depression and other emotional or psychological issues. Chronic stress is also associated with suppression of immune function and chronic health problems, as is depression. We were thus interested in examining the effect that the stress of being in an abusive relationship has on individuals and whether the magnitude of this effect is related to the assessment of an audio clip depicting a conflict situation.

We also wondered if the balance of power in relationships and how much support individuals get from their dating partner affects their mental and physical health and/or their assessment of a conflict situation.

In this study we had you fill out a number of questionnaires regarding your personal characteristics, psychological and physical health. You then listened to an audio clip portraying a conflict, which may or may not have contained abusive behaviour. You were then asked to evaluate the scenario, and fill out further questionnaires.

While many who participate in this study have not experienced psychological abuse, some have. If you believe that you are in an abusive relationship, it is important to be able to recognize it in order to prevent further escalation of abuse. It is also important to understand that you are not to blame. People who have experienced abuse or other traumatic events in their lives may also develop depression or anxiety disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder. If you have concerns related to your own well-being or this study, we are providing some numbers and information about services and people that you can contact for more information and/or help.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. You were a very important collaborator and without your outstanding commitment to the study, this research certainly would not have been possible. Thank you!

Contacts

The following people are involved in this research project and may be contacted at any time if you have any further questions about the project, what it means, or concerns about how it was conducted:

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If you have any ethical concerns about this study please contact: Dr Avi Parush, Chair of Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, 613 520-2600 ext. 6026 or Dr. Janet Mantler, Chair of Dept. of Psychology, 613 520-2600 ext. 4173

If you have any worries/concerns about your personal well-being, you can contact the following services:

Assaulted Women's Helpline. For crisis counselling, emotional support, etc.:
www.awhl.org/

SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone): www.safe4all.org

Family of Men Support Society: www.familyofmen.com

Tele-aide Crisis line: French language volunteers available for anonymous consultation and referrals to a variety of services: Ottawa-Gatineau 741-6433, Outaouais-Quebecois Rural 1-800-567-9699 or email plume@tel-aide-outaouais.org, 7am-2am, 7days/wk. More info at: <http://www.tel-aide-outaouais.org/>

Mental Health Canada: <http://www.mentalhealthcanada.com/>

Mental Health Crisis Line: If you or somebody you know is experiencing serious mental health problems, call toll free, 24 hours a day, within Ottawa 613-722-6914, outside Ottawa 1-866-996-0991. More info at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Rape Crisis Hotline: 1.800.656.HOPE (4673)
Self Injury Hotline: 1.800.DON'T.CUT (366-8288)

Appendix I

Additional Debriefing (if high total BDI score and/or high suicidal intent)

Depression is a condition that can occur for many reasons, including workplace, school, or relationship stressors, traumatic life events, discrimination, as well as physical/biological imbalances. Approximately 10-15% of people will suffer some degree of depression during their lifetime. With advances in modern medicine, most people can readily be treated for this illness, which if unattended can be long lasting and affect many aspects of one's life. The symptoms of depression comprise:

- Poor or depressed mood, or a reduction in the pleasure gained from otherwise positive experiences
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbances (loss of appetite, or overeating despite not being hungry), which may be linked to weight changes
- Lack of sexual interest
- Fatigue and lethargy (you don't feel like doing anything)
- An inability to focus (e.g., you have a hard time reading)
- Reduced interactions with family and friends
- Thoughts of suicide

Someone who is depressed may experience several (3-4), but not necessarily all of the above symptoms.

It is likewise the case that 60% of individuals will encounter a severe traumatic event in their lives and of these people, a fair number will develop symptoms that cause severe anxiety. Illnesses of this nature, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be treated. Once again, if unattended, the repercussions can be severe. Symptoms include:

- Hyperarousal (e.g., feelings of anxiety and reactivity even to minor situations)
- Intrusive thoughts (memories of the event come into your head frequently)
- Avoiding thoughts or stimuli related to the event

These symptoms can persist for more than a month following the event, and influence your day-to-day functioning.

Your responses to this survey suggest that you may be experiencing one of the above disorders. If you are not already receiving attention for this problem, it is suggested that you contact your family physician. It is not a good idea to allow problems to fester, as ruminating over these problems will typically not make them go away. Your family physician or counsellor will usually be able to help you or to refer you to someone who can. If you do not have a family physician, then you can contact either of the following:

Mental Health Crisis Line: within Ottawa (613) 722-6914, outside Ottawa 1-866-996-0991, Web Site: <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Ottawa Distress Centre: (613) 238 1089, Web Site: www.dcottawa.on.ca

Distress Centre of Toronto: (416) 408 help, Web Site: www.torontodistresscentre.com