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# A study of how love is experienced over time in non-heterosexual relationships

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# LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

## Appendix A

### Survey Instrument

#### A study of how non-heterosexual relationships change over time

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study on love in same-gender relationships. The first couple questions will determine your eligibility to participate in the study. If you are eligible, you will then be directed to an informed consent page after which the study will begin.

Thank you again for your time and participation.

Michelle Okun

M.S.W. Candidate

#### A study of how non-heterosexual relationships change over time

##### Screening Question

1. Are you over the age of 18?

Yes

No

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#### Screening Question

\* 2. Do you currently reside in the United States of America?

Yes

No

### A study of how non-heterosexual relationships change over time

#### Screening Question

\* 3. Are you currently in a non-heterosexual relationship?

Yes

No

### A study of how non-heterosexual relationships change over time

#### Screening Question

\* 4. Have you been with your primary partner for 2 or more years?

Yes

No

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#### Screening Question

\* 5. Are you well acquainted with the researcher in any capacity (friend, professional, etc.)?

Yes

No

# LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

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### Informed Consent

#### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA

.....  
Title of Study: A Study of How Love is Experienced Over Time in Non-heterosexual Relationships

Investigator(s): Michelle Okun, Master's of Social Work Candidate, Smith College, [REDACTED]

#### Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of how love is experienced over time in non-heterosexual relationships
- You were selected as a possible participant because you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer, and you are over the age of 18. In addition you have been in a non-heterosexual relationship for a minimum of two years and are living in the United States.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

#### Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is to investigate how love changes over time in non-heterosexual relationships
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's in social work degree.
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

#### Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Complete screening questions for an online survey to confirm eligibility for the survey. If you meet criteria you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire, the Triangle Theory of Love Scale, the Couples Satisfaction Index, and 6 short-answer questions.

#### Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The present study poses a low risk to participants. However, because you will be asked to reflect on your own relationship/s, it is possible that participation in the study may cause some uncomfortable thoughts and feelings to occur regarding your current relationship. You have the right to refuse to

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

answer any question on the survey without repercussions or exit the survey at any time. Your participation in the survey will be totally voluntary and anonymous.

### Benefits of Being in the Study

- Participation in the study will provide you a unique experience to reflect upon your relationships with your partners and how it has changed or not changed over time. You will have the potential benefit of knowing you helped establish research that further legitimizes non-heterosexual relationships because it will provide a fuller examination of what love looks like within same-sex couples of different ages and different relationship stages.
- This research is intended to benefit social work by increasing the amount of research on love in non-heterosexual couples. The purpose of this study is to add to the scientific literature by collecting survey data about passion, intimacy, commitment, and relationship satisfaction in non-heterosexual relationships. Relationship counselors could use this information to show couples they are not alone and many couples experience challenges over the course of their relationship.

### \* 6. Confidentiality

- Participation in the study will be anonymous and data will be kept confidential and only will be accessed by me, my research advisor, and Marjorie Postal, Smith statistician. When you access the questionnaire's website, no information, such as your email address, will be collected or stored that would allow your identity to be traced. Participants will not be asked to identify themselves. Demographic questions are anonymous, therefore no one will be able to be identified by their responses.
- For open-ended questions, you should not provide any identifying information in your responses. Please do not use your name or other identifying information about friends, family, or yourself, this information will be treated confidentially and will be immediately deleted. If this study is used for publication or presentation, any possible identifying information about participants will be disguised.
- All data collected will be stored on SurveyMonkey.com, which is a website that is firewalled, password-protected, and encrypted. SurveyMonkey's Security Statement is listed in (surveymonkey.com).
- All data will be stored on the website's server for three years as required by Federal regulations, after which they will be destroyed or kept secure as long as they are needed.

### Payments/gift

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

### Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to answer any question on the survey. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any point before electronically submitting their survey. If you choose to withdraw, none of the answers to the questions completed prior to withdrawal will be saved. However, after submission, you will be unable to withdraw because due to the anonymous nature of participation, it would be impossible to identify your answers.

### Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

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You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Michelle Okun, [REDACTED]. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

### Consent

BY CHECKING "I AGREE" AND CLICKING "NEXT" YOU ARE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION, THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

I AGREE

I DO NOT AGREE

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The first set of questions are your demographic characteristics.

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#### 7. What is your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Gender Fluid/Gender Queer/Non-binary
- Masculine Identified
- Feminine Identified
- Trans\* Masculine
- Trans\* Feminine
- Agender
- Bigender
- Androgenous
- Cis-gender
- Gender questioning
- Two-spirit
- Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_



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8. What is your sexual orientation?

- Gay/Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Heteroflexible
- Homoflexible
- Questioning
- Sapiosexual
- Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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9. What is your age?

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10. What race do you identify with primarily?

- White
  - Black or African-American
  - American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - Asian
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - From multiple races
  - Some other race (please specify)
- 

11. What is your religious affiliation?

- Christian
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Agnostic
- Hindu
- Other

12. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

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13. What is your household income?

- Under \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$30,000
- \$30,000-\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$75,000
- \$75,000-\$100,000
- Above \$100,000

14. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Employed, working full-time
- Employed, working part-time
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, NOT looking for work
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work
- Student

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

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15. How many years have you been with your primary partner?

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16. If you have children, how many do you have?

- I do not have children
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more
- Other (please specify)
- 

17. Do your children currently live at home?

- Yes
- No
- Some do, some do not
- I do not have children
- Other (please specify)
- 

18. Who resides in your household? Please provide gender identity of any adults, approximate age, and how they are related to you (e.g., child, stepchild, partner, parent, etc.)

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LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

19. What is your relationship status?

- In a relationship
- In an open relationship
- Married
- Partnered
- Choose not to label
- Engaged
- Other (please specify)

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#### Sternberg Triangle of Love Scale

20. Please rate each statement on a scale of 1-9, 1 being the lowest and least true, and 9 being the highest and most true.

	Not at all-		Moderately-					Extremely-	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. I am actively supportive of _____'s well-being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I have a warm relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I am able to count on _____ in times of need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. _____ is able to count on me in times of need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am willing to share myself and my possessions with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I receive considerable emotional support from _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I give considerable emotional support to _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I communicate well with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I value _____ greatly in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I feel close to _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I have a comfortable relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I feel that I really understand _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I feel that _____ really understands me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

	Not at all-				Moderately-				Extremely-
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. I feel that I can really trust _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I share deeply personal information about myself with _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Just seeing _____ excites me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I find myself thinking about _____ frequently during the day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. My relationship with _____ is very romantic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I find _____ to be very personally attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I idealize _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as _____ does.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. I would rather be with _____ than with anyone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I especially like physical contact with _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. There is something almost "magical" about my relationship with _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I adore _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I cannot imagine life without _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. My relationship with _____ is passionate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

	Not at all-				Moderately-				Extremely-
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
29. When I see romantic movies and read romantic books, I think of _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I fantasize about _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. I know that I care about _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Because of my commitment to _____, I would not let other people come between us. _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. I could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. I expect my love for _____ to last for the rest of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. I will always feel a strong responsibility for _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. I view my commitment to _____ as a solid one.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. I cannot imagine ending my relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. I am certain of my love for _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. I view my relationship with _____ as permanent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. I view my relationship with _____ as a good decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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	Not at all-				Moderately-				Extremely-
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
43. I feel a sense of responsibility toward _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. I plan to continue my relationship with _____.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. Even when _____ is hard to deal with, I remain committed to our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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#### Couples Satisfaction Index

21. Please answer on a scale from 0-6, 0 being extremely unhappy, and 6 being perfect.

	0 Extremely unhappy	1 Fairly Unhappy	2 A little unhappy	3 Happy	4 Very Happy	5 Extremely Happy	6 Perfect
Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Please rate the following statement on a scale of 5 to 0, 5 being all the time and 0 being never.

	5- All the time	4- Most of the time	3- More often than not	2- Occasionally	1- Rarely	0- Never
In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Rate on a scale of 0 to 5 how true each statement is with 0 being the not true at all and 5 being completely true.

	0- Not at all true	1- A little true	2- Somewhat true	3- Mostly true	4- Almost completely true	5- Completely true
Our relationship is strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My relationship with my partner makes me happy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really feel like part of a team with my partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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#### CSI Continued

24. Rate the following statements on a scale from 0 to 5 with 0 being not at all and 5 being completely

	0- Not at all	1- A little	2- Somewhat	3- Mostly	4- Almost completely	5- Completely
How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well does your partner meet your needs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your relationship. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
INTERESTING - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 - BORING	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BAD - 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - GOOD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FULL - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 - EMPTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STURDY - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 - FRAGILE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DISCOURAGING - 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - HOPEFUL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ENJOYABLE - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 - MISERABLE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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#### Open Response Questions

26. Are you currently in a polyamorous or otherwise "open" relationship? If yes, has commitment, passion, or intimacy, been impacted within your primary relationship? Please elaborate.

27. What factors have influenced you to stay with your current partner? Please elaborate.

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#### Open response questions

28. How has your relationship changed over time?

29. Has acceptance or rejection by family, government, friends, etc. impacted commitment within your relationship? How so?

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#### Open response questions

30. Talk about communication between you and your partner. How do you disagree/argue? How do you support one another?

31. What do you love most about your partner? What is one thing you wish you could change about your partner?

### A study of how non-heterosexual relationships change over time

#### Open response questions

32. Please use this final page to provide any comments you would like to make about this study or any additional information you would like to provide.

Thank you for participating in this research. Please click "Done" to submit your responses and exit the study.

LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

**Appendix B**

**Approval Letter from the**

**Smith College Human Subjects Review Committee**

February 17, 2015

Michelle Okun

Dear Michelle,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

*Please note the following requirements:*

**Consent Forms:** All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

**Maintaining Data:** You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

*In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:*

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

**Renewal:** You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

**Completion:** You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,



Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.

Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Marsha Pruett, Research Advisor

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

### Appendix C

#### Generic Blurb

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a master's student at Smith College School for Social Work and I am in the process of writing my graduate thesis about intimacy, passion, and commitment within non-heterosexual relationships. The goal of this research is to add to the current research on love, which is primarily about heterosexual individuals, and give a voice to GLBTQ folks through research. This research is anonymous and confidential. I am hoping to have participants of all ages and would really appreciate being able to write a post that could be sent out to this group that includes the link to the anonymous online survey. Is this something you would consider? If not, please let me know if I may contact you in the future and send you the survey to pass along outside of the group.

Thank you,  
Michelle Okun  
MSW Candidate  
mokun@smith.edu

# LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

## Appendix D

### **Blurb Posted to Meetup.com and Facebook**

Hello there! Do you identify as non-heterosexual? Have you been dating your primary partner for more than two years? I am conducting a study for my Master's thesis at Smith College School for Social Work that explores non-heterosexual love in longer-term (two years or longer) relationships. In order to participate in this study you must live in the United States and be over the age of 18, and have a primary relationship lasting 2 or more years.

As someone who identifies as being in a non-heterosexual relationship, I was troubled by the lack of research on love within non-heterosexual relationships. The purpose of this study is to add to the scientific literature by collecting survey data about passion, intimacy, commitment, and relationship satisfaction in non-heterosexual relationships.

Your participation would involve a brief online screening to ensure eligibility, followed by an anonymous Internet survey that will take you around 30-45 minutes to complete.

Contact Michelle Okun at [mokun@smith.edu](mailto:mokun@smith.edu) for information on participation. If you know someone who might be interested in participation, please share this post and link with them. Thank you for reading and sharing!

Please click on the following link if you are interested in participating in this research:



LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix E

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA

.....  
**Title of Study:** A Study of How Love is Experienced Over Time in Non-heterosexual Relationships

**Investigator(s):** Michelle Okun, Master's of Social Work Candidate, Smith College, XXX-XXX-XXXX

.....

**Introduction**

- You are being asked to be in a research study of how love is experienced over time in non-heterosexual relationships
- You were selected as a possible participant because you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer, and you are over the age of 18. In addition you have been in a non-heterosexual relationship for a minimum of two years and are living in the United States.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

**Purpose of Study**

- The purpose of the study is to investigate how love changes over time in non-heterosexual relationships
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's in social work degree.
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

**Description of the Study Procedures**

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Complete screening questions for an online survey to confirm eligibility for the survey. If you meet criteria you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire, the Triangle Theory of Love Scale, the Couples Satisfaction Index, and 6 short-answer questions.

**Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study**

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

- The present study poses a low risk to participants. However, because you will be asked to reflect on your own relationship/s, it is possible that participation in the study may cause some uncomfortable thoughts and feelings to occur regarding your current relationship. You have the right to refuse to answer any question on the survey without repercussions or exit the survey at any time. Your participation in the survey will be totally voluntary and anonymous.

### **Benefits of Being in the Study**

- Participation in the study will provide you a unique experience to reflect upon your relationships with your partners and how it has changed or not changed over time. You will have the potential benefit of knowing you helped establish research that further legitimizes non-heterosexual relationships because it will provide a fuller examination of what love looks like within same-sex couples of different ages and different relationship stages.
- This research is intended to benefit social work by increasing the amount of research on love in non-heterosexual couples. The purpose of this study is to add to the scientific literature by collecting survey data about passion, intimacy, commitment, and relationship satisfaction in non-heterosexual relationships. Relationship counselors could use this information to show couples they are not alone and many couples experience challenges over the course of their relationship.

### **Confidentiality**

- Participation in the study will be anonymous and data will be kept confidential and only will be accessed by me, my research advisor, and Marjorie Postal, Smith statistician. When you access the questionnaire's website, no information, such as your email address, will be collected or stored that would allow your identity to be traced. Participants will not be asked to identify themselves. Demographic questions are anonymous, therefore no one will be able to be identified by their responses.
- For open-ended questions, you should not provide any identifying information in your responses. Please do not use your name or other identifying information about friends, family, or yourself, this information will be treated confidentially and will be immediately deleted. If this study is used for publication or presentation, any possible identifying information about participants will be disguised.
- All data collected will be stored on SurveyMonkey.com, which is a website that is firewalled, password-protected, and encrypted. SurveyMonkey's Security Statement is listed in (surveymonkey.com).
- All data will be stored on the website's server for three years as required by Federal regulations, after which they will be destroyed or kept secure as long as they are needed.

### **Payments/gift**

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

### **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to answer any question on the survey. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any point before electronically submitting their survey. If you choose to withdraw, none of the answers to the questions completed prior to withdrawal will be saved. However, after submission, you will be unable to withdraw because due to the anonymous nature of participation, it would be impossible to identify your answers.

### **Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns**

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Michelle Okun, mokun@smith.edu. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

### **Consent**

BY CHECKING "I AGREE" AND CLICKING "NEXT" YOU ARE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION, THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

- .  I AGREE
- .  I DO NOT AGREE

## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

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LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix F

Permission to use Triangle of Love Scale

Dear Mr. Sternberg,

10/12/14

I am currently a second year student at the Smith School for Social Work, class of A'15. For my graduate thesis I was hoping to receive permission to use the Triangle of Love Scale you developed. Please let me know if I may use the Triangle of Love Scale with participants in my study.

Best,  
Michelle Okun  
MSW Candidate A'15  
Smith School for Social Work

Of course. Good luck! Best, Bob

10/12/14

Robert J. Sternberg  
Professor of Human Development  
Cornell University  
B44 MVR Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853

LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix G

Permission to use Couples Satisfaction Index

<http://www.courses.rochester.edu/surveys/funk/>

Scales developed and validated in the lab and *freely available for use*.

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## LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I cannot imagine life without \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. My relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ is passionate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. When I see romantic movies and read romantic books, I think of \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I fantasize about \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I know that I care about \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Because of my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_, I would not let other people come between us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I expect my love for \_\_\_\_\_ to last for the rest of my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I will always feel a strong responsibility for \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I view my commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ as a solid one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I cannot imagine ending my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I am certain of my love for \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I view my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ as permanent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I view my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ as a good decision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I feel a sense of responsibility toward \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I plan to continue my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. Even when \_\_\_\_\_ is hard to deal with, I remain committed to our relationship.

### Scoring

Psychologist Robert Sternberg sees love as being composed of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The first 15 items in the scale reflect intimacy, the second 15 measure passion, and the final 15 reflect commitment. Add up your scores for each group of 15 items. Find the scores closest to your three totals in the appropriate column below to determine the degree to which you experience each of these three components of love.

Intimacy (Items 1–15)	Passion (Items 16–30)	Commitment (Items 31–45)	
93	73	85	Significantly below average
102	85	96	Somewhat below average
111	98	108	Average
120	110	120	Somewhat above average
129	123	131	Significantly above average

According to Sternberg, high scores in all three components would indicate consummate love. However, uneven or low scores do not necessarily mean that a relationship is not strong: All relationships have ups and downs, and the nature of a relationship may change over time.



# LONG-TERM NONHETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

## Appendix I

### Couples Satisfaction Index

#### Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16)

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Unhappy 0	Fairly Unhappy 1	A Little Unhappy 2	Happy 3	Very Happy 4	Extremely Happy 5	Perfect 6
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	All the time 5	Most of the time 4	More often than not 3	Occa- sionally 2	Rarely 1	Never 0
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	Not at all TRUE 0	A little TRUE 1	Some- what TRUE 2	Mostly TRUE 3	Almost Completely TRUE 4	Completely TRUE 5
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3. Our relationship is strong

4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy

5. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner

6. I really feel like part of a team with my partner

	Not at all 0	A little 1	Some- what 2	Mostly 3	Almost Completely 4	Completely 5
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7. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?

8. How well does your partner meet your needs?

9. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

10. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes *how you feel about your relationship*. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

11.	INTERESTING	5	4	3	2	1	0	BORING
12.	BAD	0	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD
13.	FULL	5	4	3	2	1	0	EMPTY
14.	STURDY	5	4	3	2	1	0	FRAGILE
15.	DISCOURAGING	0	1	2	3	4	5	HOPEFUL
16.	ENJOYABLE	5	4	3	2	1	0	MISERABLE