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## Trust, jealousy and communication in long-term couples practicing consensual non-monogamy

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## **ABSTRACT**

This cross-sectional exploratory quantitative study examined trust and communication patterns among adults practicing consensual non-monogamy (CNM). Previous relationship research in this area has primarily examined couples in demographically homogenous relationships (heterosexual, white, and married). A review of the literature suggested that adults engaging in consensual non-monogamy are more diverse. Our recruitment strategies and study design was successful in recruiting a more diverse group of participants. Twenty-eight adults in long-term CNM relationships completed a 56-item online questionnaire. Responses were examined to explore the relationship between communication patterns and relationship tenure. The relationship tenure of couples and the gender preference of participants were allowed to vary in an effort to explore the possibility that relationship tenure is associated with positive self-reports on trust and communication dimensions.

The findings were more thematically relevant than statistically significant; however emotional jealousy was found to have decreased as length of relationship increased.

The potential benefits of this research to the field of social work and society at large are engaging in ongoing investigation of and contribution to social science knowledge by gaining more understanding about the nature of trust, jealousy, and communication in intimate interpersonal relationships.

**TRUST, JEALOUSY, AND COMMUNICATION IN LONG-TERM COUPLES  
PRACTICING CONSENSUAL NON-MONOGAMY**

A project based upon an independent investigation,  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2016

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thanks are owed to the people who were willing to participate in this study. These individuals bravely shared information about an intimate aspect of their lives. In the interest of helping everyone understand a little more about making it work in relationships, these folks additionally shed light on a stigmatized population.

I would also like to thank my wonderful thesis advisor Elizabeth Irvin, PhD, LICSW, without whom this study could never have been completed.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this exploratory, cross-sectional study was to examine the dimensions of self-reported trust, jealousy, and communication in adults who endorsed being a member of a couple in a long-term relationship practicing consensual non-monogamy (CNM). The study examined whether relationship orientation seemed to have any effect on the longevity of long-term intimate relationships among CNM couples. More specifically, this study intended to explore whether the tenure of consensual non-monogamy relationships had any correlation with levels of trust, jealousy, and ability to communicate well.

Similar to sexual orientation, relationship orientation can be thought of as existing along a spectrum. Non-monogamy encompasses romantic relationship orientations in which “all partners agree that engaging in sexual and/or romantic relationships with other people is allowed and part of their relationship arrangement” (Conley, Moors, Matsick & Ziegler, 2013, p. 2). This study focused on relationship constellations involving one primary romantic partnership with extraneous sexual partnerships, though this is not the full extent of CNM.

Key components of interpersonal interactions in relationship research have focused on the dimensions of trust, compatibility, communication, and conflict resolution skills (Ni, 2013). When initially considering this subject matter, the expectation of this researcher was that since one-on-one monogamous relationships are challenging to navigate in general, those who engage in CNM relationship structures must require higher levels of trust and lower levels of jealousy as well as an enhanced capacity to communicate openly, negotiate boundaries, and resolve conflict within the arrangement.

In an era when more than half of marriages end in divorce, clinical social workers and other therapists may want to reconsider what the institution of marriage means for the family. The goal of this project is twofold. First, to contribute to research in this emerging area by gaining more understanding about the nature of trust, jealousy, and communication in non-monogamous intimate interpersonal relationships. And, to provide evidence-based information that may impact practice methods for this little researched area.



## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

This review has three goals. First, to describe how definitions of intimate partner relationships have evolved in the last several decades and the implications of these changes for this study. Second, to review the concepts of trust, jealousy, and communication as they have been used in intimate partner research. And, third, to identify how these concepts have been applied to studies examining consensual non-monogamy.

#### Historical Context

Contemporary intimate partner research has only recently begun to examine non-monogamous relationship structures. Decades of research have been devoted to the study of traditional marriage between heterosexual couples. Monogamy remains the most common form of romantic relationship orientation. Contemporary intimate partner relationships include civil unions and domestic partnerships. Recognition and acceptance of LGBTQ couples' right to legally marry in the United States is rapidly evolving, although published findings have consistently demonstrated that stigma exists around non-monogamous styles of relationships (Conley, Moors, Matsick, & Ziegler, 2013). There is more public knowledge about varying forms of how people choose to participate in intimate relationships.

Intimate partner research about non-monogamous relationships most often examines *polyamory*. Polyamory, a hybrid word of Greek and Latin origin, is widely cited as being first coined in 1990 by Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart. In her article, "A Bouquet of Lovers," Zell-Ravenheart defines polyamory as engaging in multiple loving relationships in which all parties are informed and consenting to the arrangement. For the purposes of this study, *consensual non-*

*monogamy* (CNM)—otherwise termed *ethical non-monogamy* or *responsible non-monogamy*—can be defined as “Any relationship that is not sexually and/or emotionally exclusive by the explicit agreement and with the full knowledge of all the parties involved” (Luna & Marx presentation, 2016). However, there is no definition that has universal acceptance and various terms or labels as they are currently understood continue to be in flux.

## **Trust**

Prior research on the topic of trust in intimate relationships has led to the development of assessment scales which measure distinct dimensions of trust, including the Trust in Close Relationships scale (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). However, the dimension of trust has not been studied extensively in non-heteronormative samples. Using PubMed and PsychInfo search engines, only two articles were found which examined the dimension of trust in non-heteronormative intimate partner arrangements.

Johnson-George & Swap (1985) examined dimensions of predictability, dependability, and faith (1982). Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna identified gender differences in their study which examined the dimensions of reliability, emotional trust, and general trust. Although the scales were determined to be sound measures, both studies were conducted in the 1980’s and may not be reflective of changing contemporary views. Additionally, Johnson-George and Swap’s study was solely made up of undergraduate participants, whose views may not be applicable across age ranges to relationships at varying stages of life. Furthermore, the Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna study was conducted in Canada, which, again, may not be applicable across cultures.

In the study by Syvertsen et al. (2015), which examined female sex workers and their noncommercial male partners, the correlation between trust and relationship satisfaction and with conflict was examined with moderate significance.

A study by Zak and McDonald (1997) surveyed lesbians and heterosexual women, ages 18-36 years, at social events held at four colleges in the northeast, which learned that lesbians scored higher in trust though did not report greater satisfaction than heterosexual women (p. 905).

### **Jealousy**

Jealousy in interpersonal relationships is a well-researched topic of interest. *Romantic jealousy* is considered differently from *sexual jealousy*. Romantic jealousy is described by White as “. . . a complex of thoughts, feelings, and actions which follow threats to self-esteem and/or threats to the existence or quality of the relationship, when those threats are generated by the perception of a real or potential attraction between one’s partner and a (perhaps imaginary) rival” (1981, p. 24). Whereas, sexual jealousy has been defined as “the aversive emotional response that is triggered by the real or imagined sexual attraction between the partner in a romantic relationship and a third person” (Buunk & Hupka, 1987, p. 13).

The phenomenon of romantic jealousy only began to be studied academically in the 1980’s (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). White (1981) distinguished three components on his research: thoughts, feelings, and coping behaviors. His samples were predominantly white college students, limiting the generalizability. Buunk and Hupka (1987) looked at differences in the elicitation of sexual jealousy cross-culturally and found that, not only are there gender differences for jealousy, there is cultural variation as well. None of the research has been applied to romantic or sexual jealousy in nontraditional configurations of intimate relationships.

### **Communication**

Interpersonal relationship research often examines correlational links between communication and attachment styles. Dwyer (2008) conducted a qualitative study of five Canadian couples in distressed intimate relationships who have previously participated in marital

therapy. The study identified barriers (i.e. differing perceptions, personalities, and communication styles; conflict strategies; avoidance tactics; spillover and baggage; and gender issues) and contributors (i.e. positive communication indicators; similar beliefs/personalities; feeling safe to communicate; verification of the message; connecting through body language and touch; and self-awareness and partner empathy) of effective communication. No literature has been published which specifically addresses communication patterns or strategies in CNM relationships.

### **These Concepts in Studies of CNM**

Although monogamy is perceived to be the exemplar form of intimate relationships in our society, the high rates of digression from monogamy in the form of infidelity and divorce challenge how widely desirable the notion of monogamy may truly be (Conley et al., 2013; Kipnis, 2004; Ley, 2009; Perel, 2006). Conley, Moors, Matsick & Ziegler (2013) conducted four studies that addressed the *halo effect* of monogamy. Halo effect is a term coined by psychologist Thorndike (1920) to describe the tendency for an impression created in one area to influence opinion in another area. He examined stigma in the context of non-monogamy by looking at responses to clearly arbitrary traits (i.e. “is reliable at daily dog walking” and “promotes flossing teeth daily,”) in which an individual’s relationship orientation should not matter. From their results, it was concluded that there exists some perceived benefit in monogamy for the individual and society. Part of what needs to be determined is whether the supposed beneficial necessity for monogamy is valid. Conley et al. (2014) published a theoretical critique in which popular assumptions about the benefits and outcomes of monogamous relationships were examined. Monogamy was perceived to improve sexuality by increasing the frequency, quality, and desirability of sex; preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections; increasing relationship quality by reducing jealousy while increasing trust and overall satisfaction; and,

provide benefits to the family with regards to child-rearing. Conley et al. further argue in their critique that there is no direct immediate evidence for the hypothesis that monogamy increased sexual frequency and desire; no one has compared the patterns of sexual behavior between monogamous versus consensually non-monogamous relationships. It is also an unfounded assertion that putting the label of monogamy on a relationship would afford individuals safer haven from sexually transmitted infections; in fact, research shows that individuals who are unfaithful in monogamous relationships are less likely to practice safer sex than openly non-monogamous individuals (Conley, Moors, Ziegler, & Karathanasis, 2012, p. 1563).

In terms of communicating and negotiating around boundaries, consensual non-monogamy challenges the supposedly mutually exclusive categories of ‘friend’ and ‘lover’ that exists as part of “the dominant version of heterosexuality” (Barker, 2005, p. 81). The idea of non-monogamous relationships holds certain implications for a constructivist perspective on relationships in which emphasis is placed on openness and honesty within one’s relationships. Barker challenges the concept of monogamy as a way for women to explore and potentially reform “gendered power relationships within heterosexuality” (p. 77). While most prior studies report no significant differences in relationship satisfaction and commitment between monogamous and non-monogamous relationships, it was found that sexual agreement satisfaction may be influenced by different factors depending on the type of agreement, and issues such as jealousy, setting boundaries, and communicating needs to partners often arose (McLean 2004; Hosking, 2014). Hosking studied a population of gay men while McLean’s looked at bisexual men and women, whereas they did not examine if variance existed with strictly heterosexual couples. Also, both McLean’s and Hosking’s research were conducted in Australia, which may or may not influence cross-cultural implications.

## **Gaps and Future Research**

The study of CNM is still a relatively new field that came to more public attention in the 1970's. The populations on which psychological research has been conducted thus far is limited to mostly white, heterosexual couples who engage in partner-swapping and "swinging" for fun, which is quite different than CNM as the foundational structure of an intimate relationship (Pappas, 2013). Previous research indicates that those who engage in CNM relationships are demographically homogenous; however, the populations who engage in CNM are actually quite diverse in terms of race, sexual orientation, etc. Rubin et al. (2014) contrast couples in CNM relationships with those in monogamous relationships to investigate the extent to which individuals with certain demographic variables are categorically over- or under-represented in CNM and monogamous relationships studies. CNM and non-CMN were compared on dimensions of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age.

It is also worth mentioning that all research that discussed the issue of jealousy in open relationships found that honesty and communication styles had a buffering effect on (reduced) jealousy scores (McLean 2004; Hosking, 2014).

Based on our review of the sparse literature examining trust and communication among couples in non-traditional sexual arrangements, a large area for research has been left virtually untouched. The existing research tools, while they have strong construct validity and test-retest reliability, were developed and tested using normative samples. Our strategy included which included modify the language in the existing measurement tools so that questions could be more inclusive and respectful of the relationship diversity we hoped to study

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

This was a mixed methods survey-based study. Anonymous surveys were selected because of the likelihood of increasing enrollment and accurate response rates (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). This methodology was chosen due to the sensitive nature of the topic area. Participants were invited to complete an anonymous online survey (Appendix E), expected to take about 45 minutes to complete, after giving informed consent (Appendix B). The survey was housed on a secure online portal provided through SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey Inc., Palo Alto, CA: <http://surveymonkey.com>). Volunteering participants were linked to the survey and presented with an inclusion criteria page. After successfully screening into the study, potential participants were automatically directed to an online copy of the Informed Consent (IC), where they were also informed that the page may be downloaded and copied by the participant for their records. A copy of the survey may be found in Appendices D and E. The questionnaire was organized into four sections: 1) demographic information, 2) trust scale 3) jealousy scale, and 4) communication questions that looked at participants' capacity for negotiation and compromise.

#### **Description of the Scales**

To ensure measurement validity and reliability standardized assessment instruments were utilized as much as possible. Permission was obtained from authors of the scales to use their materials in this study; however, slight modifications to the standardized survey instruments were necessary to adjust the heteronormative language in the original instruments to fit more contemporary understandings of sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Trust.** Trust was measured using the Trust in Close Relationships Scale (TCRS) developed in 1985 by Rempel, Holmes & Zanna. Psychometric testing at the time suggested good internal consistency for the subscales. Cronbach alphas was .81; the respective subscale reliabilities were: Predictability = .70; Dependability = .72; Faith = .80.

Examination of the internal validity of the original trust scale suggested that the three dimensions of trust were moderately correlated (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) as follows:

Faith and dependability ( $r=.46, p < .001$ )

Faith and predictability ( $r=.27, p < .001$ )

Dependability and predictability ( $r=.28, p < .05$ )

With the owner's permission, the TCRS was revised for use in this study. The goal of the revisions was to shift language from bi-modal terms such as "husband and wife," to more gender and relation descriptions as inclusive as possible. So, as an example, "wife/husband" became "partner."

**The revised version (TCRS-Revised)** fielded in this study consisted of three subscales, for a total of 17 statements regarding trust in the current relationship. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from -3=Strongly Disagree to 0=Neutral to 3=Strongly Agree. These subscales were based on the dimensions of predictability (i.e. My partner behaves in a very consistent manner), dependability (i.e., I have found that my partner is unusually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me), and faith (i.e. Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support).

These three dimensions of the subscale were developed based on a theoretical model of interpersonal trust which hypothesis trust as consisting of the type of attributions surmised about



a partner's motives, in which each component was determined to be "distinct and coherent" dimensions (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). Rempel and colleagues determined that covert processes that examined the attributions or explanations that intimate partners make regarding relationship events must be included when considering behavioral accounts of the relationship. The predictability subscale looked at the consistency and stability of a partner's specific behaviors based on past experience. The dependability subscale concentrated on the dispositional qualities of the partner which warrant confidence in the face of risk and potential hurt. The faith subscale centered on feelings of confidence in the relationship and the responsiveness and degree of expected caring from the participant's partner in the face of an uncertain future.

#### **Internal Consistency and Reliability of TCRS-Revised.**

The Cronbach's alpha for our sample, using the modified version, was .24 for predictability, .78 for dependability, and .87 for faith. Findings were similar to the original (unrevised) format, with psychometric testing suggesting good internal consistency for the revised scale (Cronbach's alpha = .81) Subscale reliability findings were as follows:

Faith and dependability ( $r=.46, p < .001$ ),

Faith and predictability ( $r=.27, p < .001$ ), and

Dependability and predictability ( $r=.28, p < .05$ )

**Jealousy.** Jealousy was examined using the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale developed by Pfeiffer and Wong (1989). This scale utilized a total of 24 questions, also divided into three subscales, to assess cognitive (i.e. I suspect that X may be attracted to someone else, I suspect that X is secretly seeing someone of the opposite sex), emotional (i.e. X is flirting with someone of the opposite sex) and behavioral (i.e. I call X unexpectedly, just to see if s/he is there; I question X about his/her telephone calls) aspects of jealousy with 8 questions in each section.

Each item was also rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The Multidimensional Jealousy Scale with its three subscale components originated from the conceptual model of jealousy by Dr. Gregory L. White that considered jealousy as being composed of three components: thoughts, feelings, and coping behaviors (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989, p. 182).

The reliability of the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale was assessed by performing Cronbach's alpha on the three subscales. The alphas for cognitive jealousy, emotional jealousy, and behavioral jealousy are 0.91, 0.82, and 0.90 respectively (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989, p. 192). A high degree of internal consistency existed in that each component of the scale was determined to be moderately correlated to the others, and also correlated with previously established measures, proving validity of the scale (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989, p. 193).

In the cognitive section, anchor points ranged from 1 to 7, with 1 representing "all of the time", and 7 representing "never." The cognitive subscale was designed to assess how often participants experience suspicions concerning the participant's partner and a rival, thereby measuring an integral component of pathological jealousy. This section was reverse coded when scored—so that 1 becomes 7, 2 becomes 6, etc. —in order to control for "response-acquiescence bias" (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989, p. 186).

The emotional subscale ranged from 1=Very Pleased to 7=Very Upset. This section assessed how negatively emotionally aroused participants would feel in response to various jealousy-evoking situations. Lastly, in the behavioral section, the scale ranged from 1=Never to 7=All the Time. This subscale assessed participants' detective and protective behaviors. A low score on any of the subscales indicated more normative jealousy while higher scores suggested more pathological jealousy. The questions were modified slightly so that the language would be more contemporary, to be more considerate and inclusive of various sexual orientations.

**Communication.** A modified version of Gottman's Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (2000) was selected to examine the dimensions of accepting influence, repair attempts, and compromise. Reliability for the Gottman Sound Relationship House model is strong. Gottman reports Cronbach's alpha for husband and wife, respectively. Accepting Influence (.75, .75); Compromise (.62, .61); Repair (.87, .87). However, although the scales appeared to be clinically useful, there was no way of knowing if a profile were simply mapping people's perception of the relationship or if they were actually valid (Gottman, 1999).

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative analyses were run to test for statistical significance in possible differences or relationships between certain variables of interest. Relationship tenure ranged from 12 months to 206 months. The sample was grouped into two groups (median split) and three groups (cumulative percentage) for analysis. Sample age ranged from 21 to 54 years and two groups were created for age. Additionally, the marital status of the primary partnership was recorded as well as whether or not there was an age disparity between the partners.

**Procedures.** T-tests were run to examine the relationship between relationship tenure by marital status, age, and each of the six subscale dimensions. Pearson correlations were also run examining relationship tenure (in months) and each of the six subscale dimensions. A one-way ANOVA was run to check the difference between the three groups based on age. A chi-square analysis was planned to look at whether any relationship existed between relationship tenure and relationship congruence, separated into two groups as "congruent" and "noncongruent," defined by whether the self-identified sexual orientation of the participant and their primary romantic partner matched, but the data collected resulted in too few values to run.

In order to investigate secondary research interests of diversity among the population who self-identify as consensually non-monogamous, key themes were qualitatively identified from how people chose to label their relationship orientation (“description of relationship”) and what their negotiated arrangements actually entail (“description of contract”). These themes are discussed further in Chapter 4.

One key issue that may have arisen from conducting anonymous surveys was the existence of biases. In this case, self-report bias and confirmation bias connected to accurate recall in memory and the passage of time on questions that ask the participant to reflect upon current and prior relationships; this may have been especially true for relationship structures as complicated and socially controversial as the population targeted by this study.

### **Sample**

Two recruitment strategies were deployed: 1) Advertising on social media (i.e. Facebook) and special-interest web forums (i.e. Polyamory.com, etc.) (Appendix C), and 2) word of mouth. Notices were posted on open (as opposed to “private”) special-interest web forums; thus, consent from forum owners was not required. Owners of “private” groups were contacted for permission to post a notice about the research on the private forum. “Word of mouth” recruitment consisted of request to pass along to others who may be interested. Copies of recruitment materials may be found in Appendix C. Recruitment began as soon as final approval from the Smith HSR Committee was received and stipulated to continue until either, 1) At least 50 participants have completed the online survey, or 2) time for the data collection phase of the study elapsed, with the end date scheduled as April 30, 2016. All recruitment materials included the following statement: “This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).”

After successfully screening into the study, potential participants were automatically directed to an online copy of the informed consent (Appendix B). This document may also be downloaded and copied by the participant for their records. Once participants have read the informed consent, their agreement to participate in the study will be indicated by electronically endorsing the YES option (“I agree”) at the bottom of the informed consent. Those who endorsed YES (“I agree”) were automatically directed to the questionnaire portion of the online process. Those who did not wish to continue had the option of indicating this by endorsing the NO button (“I do not agree”), after which they were automatically redirected to a page thanking them for their interest in the study and concluded the interview. Because of the anonymous nature of their participation, once the survey was completed and closed by the participant, it was not possible to remove the participant’s responses from the data base. This was explained in the informed consent.

The researcher did not have any direct interaction with subjects, and the research plan did not use comparison or control groups. In consideration of ethics and safeguards, the questionnaires chosen for this survey were previously tested, and there were no reports in that literature of the procedures causing distress among participants. A survey design was selected to provide emotional distance from the topic, as opposed to an interview in which a participant speaks at length regarding a topic. Should a participant feel uncomfortable responding to any particular question(s), the informed consent clearly stated that questions may be skipped and, in fact, that the participant could withdraw at any time. Given these factors, the risk that the study would cause distress was considered minimal. It was not anticipated that participants would require referral to clinical resources; however, the informed consent included a section that provided online resources for those interested in the information.

## Description of the Sample

A total of 60 individuals responded to the online survey; 60 completed the screening questions page (Appendix D). Of these 60, 43 met inclusion criteria and entered the study protocol. However, 10 of those did not enter any data after entering and an additional 5 started to enter data but did not finish the survey, so their responses had to be excluded. Ultimately, this left the researcher with 28 viable sets of participant responses.

**Demographic questions.** In the interest of being as respectfully inclusive as possible, participants were encouraged to answer demographic questions of identity (i.e. sex/gender, race, sexual orientation) in open-response format. Grouping variables were created from the demographic data, with minimum criteria of 5 or more responses per cell. Racial identity groups were (1=White, 2=Hispanic, 3=Mixed/Other) ; gender identity (1=Male, 2=Female, 3=Queer/Nonconforming, 4=Trans) and sexual orientation of the primary romantic partner were grouped as (1=Heterosexual, 2=Homosexual, 3=Bisexual/Heteroflexible, 4=Queer/Pansexual) an similarly for of the Ss primary romantic partner and other sexual partner(s). This researcher chose to recognize a distinction between “bisexual/heteroflexible” and “queer/pansexual” with the idea that the former grouping seemed to hold some endorsement of a gender binary while the latter appeared not.

Table 1

*Frequencies: Racial, Gender, and Sexual Identity (N=27)*

---

Race / Racial Identity	Percent	n
White	81.5%	22
Hispanic	7.4%	2
Mixed/Other	11.1%	3
Gender		
Male	11.1%	3
Female	63.0%	17
Queer/Nonconforming	14.8%	4
Transgender	11.1%	3
Sexual Identity		
Heterosexual	14.8%	4
Homosexual	11.1%	3
Bisexual/Heteroflexible	18.5%	5
Queer/Pansexual	55.6%	15

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**Data Collection**

Data were collected online through a secure data portal using SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey Inc., Palo Alto, CA: <http://surveymonkey.com>). A copy of the survey may be found in Appendix E. Participant identity and responses were anonymous; the survey was

designed so that no identifying information or PHI will be collected. Specifically, participants were not asked to provide their name, DOB, physical address or ZIP code, IP address, email address, or other potentially identifying information. Once the online questionnaire was completed, the gathered data was converted into a Microsoft Excel file and downloaded to the researcher through a secure portal. The researcher saved the data on a password protected computer in a password protected folder. Only the researcher and thesis advisor had access to the password and password protected files. Once the files purged of any potentially identifying information inadvertently submitted by the subject, the data file was exported in a secure format to the data analyst at Smith College School for Social Work. Data from the study will be preserved for three years and stored in secure, password protected media accessible only by the researcher.



## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

This exploratory, cross-sectional study examined the dimensions of self-reported trust, jealousy, and communication in adults who endorsed being a member of a couple in a long-term relationship practicing consensual non-monogamy. In particular, we examined whether or not that relationship orientation had an effect on the tenure of relationships.

T-tests and Pearson correlations were run to determine if there were differences or correlations between the length of participants' relationship in months (tenure) and the various subscale dimensions of trust (predictability, dependability, faith), jealousy (cognitive, emotional, behavioral), and communication (accepting influence, repair attempts, compromise). No significant difference or correlation was found between length of relationship by predictability, dependability, faith, cognitive jealousy, accepting influence, repair attempts, or compromise. The very small sample size could potentially account for this lack of significant finding.

However, a significant weak negative correlation between relationship tenure and emotional jealousy was found ( $r=-.390$ ,  $p=.044$ , two-tailed); as months in relationship increased, the participants' emotional jealousy score decreased and vice versa.

A t-test for difference in emotional jealousy compared relationship tenure for 2 groups; 12-41 month tenure vs 42-206 month group ( $t(25)=2.299$ ,  $p=.30$ , two-tailed). The shorter tenure group yielded a higher mean score on the emotional jealousy subscale ( $m=25.67$ ) than the longer tenure group ( $m=15.92$ ).

While there was no significant correlation between relationship tenure and behavioral jealousy, a t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the shorter tenure group ( $m=14.92$ ) and the longer tenure group ( $m=10.62$ ) on the behavioral subscale ( $t(15.25)=2.594$ ,  $p=.020$ , two-tailed).

There were other factors that appeared to correlate with relationship tenure, specifically age of participant's primary romantic partner and whether or not the primary partnership couple were married. The sample was divided by relationship tenure into 2 groups and the groups were examined for differences in age and marital status. A significant difference in age was found, between primary partners with the shorter relationship ( $m=28$ ) and those with the longest relationship ( $m=33.6$ ) ( $t(18.97)=2.243$ ,  $p=.037$ ). As might be expected, there was a confound between age and length of relationship in the expected direction (the younger the age, the shorter the relationship).

A oneway ANOVA was run to examine the age by relationship groups (3) and a significant difference emerged ( $f(2,26)=8.182$ ,  $p=.002$ ). Tamhane's post hoc showed the significant difference in mean age was between the 12-31 months group ( $m=28.33$ ) and the 62-206 months group ( $m=37.22$ ) and between the 32-61 months group ( $m=27.22$ ) and the 62-206 month group ( $m=37.22$ ).

A t-test was run to determine if there was a difference in the length of the relationship and marital status and a significant difference was found ( $t(25)=3.499$ ,  $p=.002$ , two-tailed). Unmarried primary relationship couples were together a mean of 40.89 months as compared to a mean of 92.67 months for married respondents.

**Qualitative data.** Themes were examined for two questions. Participants were asked to describe the relationship, and the nature of their contract with their primary romantic partner.

Three of 27 participants (11.1%) wrote about being “emotionally monogamous” in their relationships, meaning that they agreed to have strictly sexual relationships with non-primary partners. 5 out of 27 participants (18.5%) described their relationship as a serious or committed partnership. 5 out of 27 (18.5%) participants talked about a hierarchical structure to their relationships, in which terms like “primary” are used. The remaining 51.8% of participants called their relationship some form of an “open relationship.” Two specified that they were “non-hierarchical” or “polyamorous,” and one other specified that they identified as “swingers.” Another participant stated that they “shared” and yet another participant called their relationship style “relationship anarchy,” a coin termed by Andie Nordgre to mean the practice of forming relationships that are not bound by rules aside from what the people involved mutually agree on, distinguished from other forms of relationships with multiple intimate partners by the postulate that there need not be a formal distinction between sexual, romantic, or platonic relationships (Anapol, 2010).

Open responses for “description of contract” showcased an interesting array of themes that were deemed important by folks in consensually non-monogamous relationships. There was a spectrum to which partners disclosed their encounters to one another, from “full disclosure” to “partial disclosure” to “agreed upon no disclosure.” Other central themes commonly touched upon were keeping encounters with other partners strictly sexual, the primary romantic partner having veto power over other sexual partners, certain sexual acts being off limits with other sexual partners, and openness to renegotiations. Full disclosure was the most often endorsed contract theme, with protection being second place and emotional honesty being third.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

This researcher initially entered into the thesis process wondering if consensual non-monogamy could be considered a viable coupling strategy for sustaining committed intimate relationships in a culture that lauds monogamy yet continues to have a problem with infidelity and divorce. The purpose of the study was to see whether the dimensions of trust, jealousy, and communication had any correlation with the tenure of long-term consensually non-monogamous relationships, with long-term being defined as a period of one year or more. Analyses of the data collected showed no significant difference or correlation was found between the length of participants' relationship in months (tenure) and the various subscale components of trust (predictability, dependability, faith), jealousy (cognitive, behavioral), or communication (accepting influence, repair attempts, compromise); however, there was a statistically significant correlation between relationship tenure and emotional jealousy. Results showed that participants appeared to be jealous the longer they were in their primary romantic relationships, which made intuitive sense. Other key statistical findings included longer relationships correlating positively with having primary romantic partners who are older in age and married to the participant.

More surprisingly were the thematic results of the open-response questions. As asserted earlier in the literature review, contrary to the beliefs of the general American public, consensual non-monogamy does not mean practicing poor sexual health and more likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections. Monogamy does not automatically afford individuals safer haven from sexually transmitted infections, although that is commonly cited as a reason monogamy is a

superior relationship style. In fact, research shows that individuals who are unfaithful in monogamous relationships are less likely to practice safer sex than openly non-monogamous individuals (Conley, Moors, Ziegler, and Karathanasis, 2012). Whereas, according to the participants of this study, it was the second most universal aspect of contracts with their primary romantic partners when agreeing to engage in outside sexual relationships.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

This was a mixed methods survey-based study where the questionnaire was hosted online to allow for anonymity, given the sensitive nature of the topic area. The principal strength of this study was that it allowed for greater diversity of identities to be represented across various demographics (i.e. age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation), whereas previous research about consensual non-monogamy from the 1970's consisted only of white, heterosexual couples who engaged in partner-swapping and "swinging" for fun. Unfortunately, that is still the image many people have in mind when confronted with the idea of people who are permitted to engage in sexual encounters outside of their relationships.

Overall, there existed the issue of generalizability across population. Most data analysis tests run did not yield statistically significant results, which was somewhat unexpected, though this was possibly due to the sample size being so small. Due to this small sample size of data collected, it is difficult to say whether any conclusions can truly be drawn about the relationship between the dimensions of trust, jealousy, or communication with the length of someone's relationship. This was likely the chief limitation of the study and, as such, many of the more interesting exploratory questions around race, gender identity, and sexual orientation could not really be extrapolated. Also, due to the societal stigma placed upon those who engage in the styles of intimate relationships this study was interested in, those feelings of "othering" may

have been further reinforced by being asked to participate in this study, which could possibly have accounted for the attrition of the number of respondents.

Other factors that could have contributed to the decrease of participants past the informed consent stage were the confusion of the language used in the survey. As an out-group member of the population being sampled, this researcher had little knowledge of how to present the survey in a way that allowed for the degree of diversity being sought while still maintaining the integrity of the terms accepted by this community as valid. As acknowledged earlier in this thesis, there is no universally accepted definition of terms to describe certain relationship configurations and negotiated arrangements. Being in an “open relationship” meant such different things to different people. Also, the new frame of pronouns made the surveying process more challenging than expected. While trying to update the questionnaires to be more inclusive of the spectrum of sexualities, particularly the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale’s assortment of jealousy-inducing scenarios, it became a logic puzzle for participants. It also became apparent that the use of “gender identity” and “sexual identity” (sexual orientation) was somewhat confusing as they were too alike and could be interpreted by some as interchangeable.

### **Implications for Social Work Practice and Areas for Further Study**

This was essentially a pilot study for research in this comparatively new field. The potential benefits of this research for social work practice and policy include engaging in ongoing investigation of and contribution to social science knowledge by gaining more understanding about the nature of trust, jealousy, and communication in intimate interpersonal relationships. More specifically, one key implication of this study is helping the research community, as well as society at large, to move towards a more diversified understanding of what contemporary intimate relationships and families look like.

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**Appendix A:**  
Smith College Human Subjects Review Committee Approval Letters



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**School for Social Work**  
Smith College  
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063  
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

December 4, 2015

Christina Wang

Dear Christina,

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.  
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Elizabeth Irvin, Research Advisor



---

**School for Social Work**  
Smith College  
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063  
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

March 2, 2016

Christina Wang

Dear Christina,

I have reviewed your amendment and it looks fine. The amendment to your study is therefore approved. Thank you and best of luck with your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.  
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Elizabeth Irvin, Research Advisor

**Appendix B:**  
Informed Consent Materials

2015-2016



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

.....  
**Title of Study:** Trust, Jealousy, and Communication in Long-Term Couples Practicing  
Consensual Non-Monogamy

**Investigator(s):** Christina Wang

**Phone:** [phone number]  
.....

**Introduction**

- You are being invited to participate in a research study. The study surveys adults who are in a long-term romantic relationship and who practice consensual non-monogamy. Consensual non-monogamy is sometimes also referred to as ethical non-monogamy.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you self-identify as being in a consensually non-monogamous relationship that has lasted for at least one year.
- Please 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 explore the dimensions of trust and communication patterns used by adults in long-term consensually non-monogamous relationships.
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's degree in social work (MSW).
- 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 fill out an anonymous online survey. The survey will take about 45 minutes to complete on average.

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

There are no reasonable foreseeable or expected risks. Participants may find that they reflect on aspects of their relationships in ways that they have not previously considered. It is possible that, for some persons, this could cause discomfort. Some participants may wish to read more about consensual non-monogamy. A list of free online resources appears at the end of this consent form.

**Benefits of Being in the Study**

- The benefits of participation are gaining insight to one’s own sense of trust, jealousy, and communication style.
- The benefits to social work/society are: to deepen our understanding of these increasingly common relationship patterns with the hope of encouraging ongoing research into this important relationship area.

**Confidentiality**

This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.

**Payments/Gift**

You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may decide not to participate without affecting your relationship with the researcher of this study or with Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you have the right not to answer any particular question, as well as to stop your participation at any time by not continuing to enter responses in the online form. If you withdraw (do not complete the survey), information you entered will not be included in the study. However, if you decide to participate and complete the questionnaire, it will not be possible in the future to withdraw from the study. That is because the survey is entirely anonymous and there would be no way for the researcher to know which responses were entered by you.

**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, Christina Wang at [email address] or by telephone at [phone number]. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. To request a copy, send the researcher an email by April 30, 2016 to: [email address]. In your email request, please do not disclose any personal identifying information. 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 clicking the “Yes, I agree to participate” button, you are indicating that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You may print a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Yes, I agree to participate in this study

No, I do not want to participate in this study

.....

## Resources

- A critical examination of popular assumptions about the benefits and outcomes of monogamous relationships. (Conley, T., Ziegler, A., Moors, A., Mastick, J., & Valentine, B.).

*Academic journal article from the Personality and Social Psychology Review that explores the assumptions around monogamous relationships being the best form of relationship style.*

[http://www.academia.edu/1986155/A\\_critical\\_examination\\_of\\_popular\\_assumptions\\_about\\_the\\_benefits\\_and\\_outcomes\\_of\\_monogamous\\_relationships](http://www.academia.edu/1986155/A_critical_examination_of_popular_assumptions_about_the_benefits_and_outcomes_of_monogamous_relationships).

- Are People In Monogamous Relationships More Satisfied? (Dr. Justin J. Lehmiller)  
*Article from Dr. Lehmiller's Sex & Psychology website, which cites another peer-reviewed academic journal article by Conley and his fellow researchers.*  
<http://www.lehmiller.com/blog/2013/4/8/are-people-in-monogamous-relationships-more-satisfied.html>.
- Seven Forms of Non-Monogamy (Elisabeth A. Sheff, Ph.D.)  
*Article from Psychology Today that looks at various types of non-monogamy.*  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-polyamorists-next-door/201407/seven-forms-non-monogamy> .
- The Gottman Institute  
*A research-based approach to creating stronger relationships.*  
<https://www.gottman.com>
- Polyamory FAQ  
*Although this website specifically talks about polyamory, the FAQs has a lot of good information about non-monogamous relationships.*  
<https://www.morethantwo.com/polyamory.html>

**Appendix C:**  
Recruitment Post

Are you at least 19-years-old? Do you self-identify as being a part of a consensually non-monogamous relationship? Has your relationship lasted for at least one year? If you answered 'YES' to these questions and would like to participate in a study on trust, jealousy, and communication in long-term consensual non-monogamous relationships, please follow this link to take part in an anonymous online survey.

[ Attached Link ]

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).

**Appendix D:**  
Survey: Inclusion Criteria

This study is designed to recruit adults who are in a long-term romantic relationship and who self-identify as currently practicing consensual non-monogamy (also known as ethical monogamy).

**INSTRUCTIONS:** To determine if you meet criteria to participate in this study, please read each of the questions below and respond “YES” or “NO.”

---

To determine if you meet criteria to participate in this study, please read each of the questions below and answer YES or NO:

- Are you at least 19 years of age? **Yes / No**
- Are you currently involved in a relationship with a primary romantic partner? **Yes / No**
- Has the relationship with your primary romantic partner lasted for at least one year? **Yes / No**
- Do you have sexual partners outside of your primary romantic relationship? **Yes / No**
- Does your primary romantic partner know that you have other sexual partners? **Yes / No**
- The survey is written in English. Can you read and write in English? **Yes / No**



**Appendix E:**  
Survey Questionnaire

**Demographic Questions**

**Please reply to each of the following questions.**

1. Please state your age, in years: **FREE TEXT FIELD**
2. Please state your race or racial identity: **FREE TEXT FIELD**
3. Please state your gender / sexual identity? **FREE TEXT FIELD**

**The next few questions ask for information about your primary romantic partner:**

4. How long have you been in a relationship with your primary romantic partner?  
\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months
5. Is your primary romantic partner younger or older than you?  
\_\_ Younger \_\_ Older \_\_ Same Age
6. What is the gender / sexual identity of your primary romantic partner? **FREE TEXT FIELD**
7. Are you and your primary romantic partner married? **Yes / No**
8. Please describe/identify your relationship with your primary romantic partner (for example, we both agree to date only each other but we can have other sexual partners ):

**FREE TEXT FIELD**

9. Briefly describe your contract with your primary romantic partner with regard to other sexual partners:

**FREE TEXT FIELD**

**The next few questions ask for information about your preferences for secondary sexual partner(s):**

10. How many secondary sexual partner(s) do you have currently? \_\_\_\_
11. Considering your current secondary partner(s), are they typically younger or older than you?  
\_\_\_\_ Younger \_\_ Older \_\_ Same Age
12. Considering your current secondary partner(s), what is your preferred gender / sexual identity of your secondary partner(s) ? **FREE TEXT FIELD**

## TRUST<sup>1</sup>

**Instructions:** Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your primary romantic partner (PRP):

1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree

- My PRP has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which others might find too threatening.
- Even when I don't know how my PRP will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed.
- Though times may change and the future is uncertain, I know my PRP will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.
- I am never certain that my PRP won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me.
- My primary romantic partner (PRP) is very unpredictable. I never know how he/she is going to act from one day to the next.
- I feel very uncomfortable when my PRP has to make decisions which will affect me personally.
- I have found that my PRP is unusually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me.
- My PRP behaves in a very consistent manner.
- Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my PRP will be concerned about my welfare.
- Even if I have no reason to expect my primary romantic partner (PRP) to share things with me, I still feel certain that he/she will.
- I can rely on my PRP to react in a positive way when I expose my weaknesses to him/her.
- When I share my problems with my PRP, I know he/she will respond in a loving way even before I say anything.
- I am certain that my PRP would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught.
- I sometimes avoid my PRP because he/she is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something which might create conflict.
- I can rely on my primary romantic partner (PRP) to keep the promises he/she makes to me.
- When I am with my primary partner, I feel secure in facing unknown new situations.
- Even when my primary partner makes excuses which sound rather unlikely, I am confident that he/she is telling the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> *Trust in Close Relationships Scale (1985) developed by Rempel, J.K., Holmes, J.G. & Zanna, M.P. (1985). Used with permission from J.K. Rempel.*

## JEALOUSY<sup>2</sup>

**Instructions:** Think of your current primary romantic partner (PRP). Please rate your response to the following questions by the appropriate number:

**Cognitive Dimension:** How often do you have the following thoughts about your PRP?

1=All the Time to 7=Never

- I suspect that my PRP is secretly seeing someone else.
- I am worried that someone else may be chasing after my PRP.
- I suspect that my PRP may be attracted to someone else.
- I suspect that my PRP may be physically intimate with someone else behind my back.
- I think that someone else may be romantically interested in my PRP.
- I am worried that someone else is trying to seduce my PRP.
- I think that my PRP is secretly developing an intimate relationship with someone else.
- I suspect that my PRP is crazy about someone else.

### **Emotional Dimension:**

**Instructions:** In responding to the following scenarios, assume for the moment that your current primary romantic partner (PRP) is interacting with an adult who is typical of the type of person whom they might select as a sexual partner. In this exercise that adult will be referred to as “Adult X.”

### **Here is a practice question:**

*Your primary romantic partner comments to you about how great a particular individual is (Adult X). Please indicate how you would react emotionally to that situation, ranging from 1=Very Pleased to 7 = Very Upset.*

**Emotional Dimension:** How would you emotionally react to the following situations?

1=Very Pleased to 7=Very Upset

- Your PRP comments to you on how great Adult X is.
- Your PRP shows a great deal of interest or excitement when in talking to Adult X
- Your PRP smiles in a very friendly manner to Adult X.
- Adult X is sexually interested in is trying to get close to your PRP.
- Your PRP is flirting with Adult X.
- Adult X is interested in dating your PRP.
- Your PRP hugs and kisses someone Adult X.
- Your PRP works very closely with Adult X (for example, at school or in an office or job).

<sup>2</sup> *Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (1989) developed by Pfeiffer and Wong. Used with permission from Dr. Paul Wong. Slight modifications in wording were made to be inclusive of all sexual orientations.*

## **Behavioral Dimension:**

**Instructions:** Think of your current primary romantic partner (PRP). Please rate your response to the following questions by the appropriate number:

How often do you engage in the following behaviors?

1=Never to 7=All the Time

- I look through my PRP's drawers, handbag, or pockets.
- I call my PRP unexpectedly, just to see if they're there.
- I question my PRP about previous or present romantic relationships.
- I say something nasty about someone of the gender my PRP is typically sexually interested in if my PRP shows an interest in that person.
- I question my PRP about their telephone calls.
- I question my PRP about their whereabouts.
- I join in whenever I see my PRP talking to a member of the gender my PRP is typically sexually interested in.
- I pay my PRP a surprise visit just to see who is with them.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (1989) developed by Pfeiffer and Wong. Used with permission from Dr. Paul Wong. Slight modifications in wording were made to be inclusive of all sexual orientations.*

## COMMUNICATION<sup>3</sup>

**Instructions:** Think of your current primary romantic partner and answer TRUE or FALSE:

### Accepting Influence:

- I generally want my partner to feel influential in this relationship.
- I can listen to my partner, but only up to a point.
- My partner has a lot of basic common sense.
- I don't reject my partner's opinions out of hand.
- My partner is basically a great help as a problem solver.

### Repair Attempts:

- We are good at taking breaks when we need them.
- Even when arguing, we maintain a sense of humor.
- We are pretty good listeners even when we have different positions on things.
- If things get heated, we can usually pull out of it and change things.
- My partner is good at soothing me when I get upset.

### Compromise:

- We are usually good at resolving our differences.
- We both believe in meeting each other halfway when we disagree.
- In discussing issues, we can usually find our common ground of agreement.
- Yielding power is not very difficult for me.
- Give and take in making decisions is not a problem in this relationship.
- 

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<sup>3</sup> Subscales borrowed from the Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (2000) developed by Dr. John M. Gottman and Dr. Julie Schwartz Gottman. Used with permission from The Gottman Institute, Inc.

## Appendix F:

### Comparison of Original and Revised Items on the Multidimensional Jealousy Scale

<b>Original Language</b>	<b>Revised Language</b>
I suspect that X is secretly seeing someone of the opposite sex.	I suspect that my primary romantic partner (PRP) is secretly seeing someone else.
I am worried that some member of the opposite sex may be chasing after X.	I am worried that someone else may be chasing after my PRP.
I suspect that X may be attracted to someone else.	I suspect that my PRP may be attracted to someone else.
I suspect that X may be physically intimate with another member of the opposite sex behind my back.	I suspect that my PRP may be physically intimate with someone else behind my back.
I think that some members of the opposite sex may be romantically interested in X.	I think that someone else may be romantically interested in my PRP.
I am worried that someone of the opposite sex is trying to seduce X.	I am worried that someone else is trying to seduce my PRP.
I think that X is secretly developing an intimate relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	I think that my PRP is secretly developing an intimate relationship with someone else.
I suspect that X is crazy about members of the opposite sex.	I suspect that my PRP is crazy about someone else.
X comments to you on how great looking a particular member of the opposite sex is.	Your partner comments to you on how great another adult is. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would you react emotionally to this?
X shows a great deal of interest or excitement in talking to someone of the opposite sex.	Your partner shows a great deal of interest or excitement when in talking to another adult. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would you react emotionally to this?
X smiles in a very friendly manner to someone of the opposite sex.	Your partner smiles in a very friendly manner to another adult. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would you react emotionally to this?

<b>Original Language</b>	<b>Revised Language</b>
A member of the opposite sex is trying to get close to X all the time.	Another adult is sexually interested in is trying to get close to your partner. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would your react emotionally to this?
X is flirting with someone of the opposite sex.	Your partner is flirting with an adult. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would your react emotionally to this?
Someone of the opposite sex is dating X.	An adult is interested in dating your partner. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would your react emotionally to this?
X hugs and kisses someone of the opposite sex.	Your partner hugs and kisses an adult. The adult is typical of the type of person whom your partner might select as a sexual partner. How would your react emotionally to this?
I look through X's drawers, handbag, or pockets.	I look through my primary romantic partner's (PRP) drawers, handbag, or pockets.
I call X unexpectedly, just to see if s/he is there.	I call my PRP unexpectedly, just to see if they are there.
I question X about previous or present romantic relationships.	I question my PRP about previous or present romantic relationships.
I say something nasty about someone of the opposite sex if X shows an interest in that person.	I say something nasty about someone of the gender my PRP is typically sexually interested in if my PRP shows an interest in that person.
I question X about his/her telephone calls.	I question my PRP about their telephone calls.
I question X about his/her whereabouts.	I question my PRP about their whereabouts.
I join in whenever I see X talking to a member of the opposite sex.	I join in whenever I see my PRP talking to a member of the gender my PRP is typically sexually interested in.
I pay X a surprise visiting just to see who is with him/her.	I pay my PRP a surprise visit just to see who is with them.

Multidimensional Jealousy Scale (1989) developed by Pfeiffer and Wong. Used with permission from Dr. Paul Wong. Modifications in wording were made to be inclusive of all sexual orientations.