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**AFFECTIVE SELF-DISCLOSURE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION
AND MARITAL QUALITY**

 Diana Vito

**Dissertation submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Clinical Psychology

University of Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario

1998



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*This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of a dear colleague and friend,
Dr. Pierre Baron,
who passed away on December 10, 1996.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have been completed without the support and guidance of many people. First and foremost, I would like to extend a special thank you to my thesis supervisor, John Hunsley, for his concern, support, and dedication throughout the many stages of my doctoral program. John's encouragement and guidance during this long process has been a constant source of inspiration, and has provided me with the motivation to persevere during the most challenging and overwhelming moments of the doctoral program. I wish to thank the members of my thesis committee, Tim Aubry, Catherine Lee, Michael McCarrey, and to the memory of Pierre Baron, for their helpful suggestions and comments throughout the course of this project. Their support of my project had a significant impact on my determination to succeed at an exceedingly difficult task. A special thank you to Dwayne Schindler for his advice concerning the statistical analyses of my data. His patience and expert knowledge helped reduce much of my anxiety over the analyses and made a very strenuous task into one that was challenging and interesting.

On a more personal note, I want to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the people who have supported me throughout this long and sometimes difficult academic journey; Vivian Iaccovino, Marta Young, Marie-Josée Roy, Lynn Brown-Rae, Nancy Delarge, Carole St-Denis, Celine Pinsent, Nili Benazon, Pierre Baron, Bob Flynn, and last, but not least, to my sister, Pina, and my parents, Maria and Giuseppe. These relationships comforted me and encouraged me through the trials and tribulations of the past years. And to Daniel, who, in his unique and endearing manner, reminded me of the importance of laughter and relaxation. I am deeply grateful for their continued presence in my life.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction	4
Communication and Marital Satisfaction	8
Marital Communication: Self-Disclosure	9
Summary and Evaluation of the Marital Self-Disclosure Literature	14
Couple Communication and Conflict Resolution	18
Summary and Evaluation of the Conflict Resolution Literature	25
Marital Therapy	30
Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples (EFT)	32
Summary and Evaluation of the EFT Studies	33
Conclusion	35
Summary and Evaluation of Previous Research	35
Contributions of the Present Study	38
 Research Questions Addressed in the Present Study	 39
Hypotheses	39
Research Questions	40
 Method	 42
Participants	42
Demographic Characteristics of Sample	43
Measures	44
Background Information Questionnaire	45
Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form	45
Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	46
Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale	46
Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples	47
Marital Agendas Protocol	47
Kansas Marital Conflict Scale	48
Ineffective Arguing Inventory	50
Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory	50
Impression Management Scale	51
Procedure	52
 Results	 56
Preliminary Analyses	56
Testing of Hypotheses	65
Hypothesis 1: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment	69
Hypothesis 2: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution ..	78

Hypothesis 3: Affective Self-Disclosure and Frequency of Relationship Conflict Resolution	99
Hypothesis 4: Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Adjustment and Relationship Conflict Resolution	102
Hypothesis 5: Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment and Frequency of Resolved Conflicts	123
Testing of Research Questions	125
Research Question 1	125
Research Question 2	130
Research Question 3	136
Discussion	140
Discussion of Hypotheses	141
Hypothesis 1: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment	141
Hypothesis 2: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution ..	145
Hypothesis 3: Affective Self-Disclosure and Frequency of Relationship Conflict Resolutions	149
Hypothesis 4: Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment and Relationship Conflict Resolution	151
Hypothesis 5: Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment and Frequency of Resolved Conflicts	154
Discussion of Research Questions	156
Research Question 1	156
Research Question 2	159
Research Question 3	160
Limitations of the Study	166
Use of Volunteer Sample: Possible Selection Biases	166
Utilization of Self-Report Data: Possible Influence on Validity	167
Utilization of Cross-Sectional Design	169
Studying only one Partner of a Couple	171
Quantity of Statistical Analyses Conducted: Influence of Type I Error	171
Implications for Research and Marital Therapy	172
References	179

List of Appendices

Appendix A	196
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants	197
Table A-1: Highest Level of Education Obtained (Percentage)	197
Table A-2: Reported Employment Status (Percentage)	197
Table A-3: Personal Yearly Income (Percentage).....	198
Table A-4: Combined Yearly Income (Percentage)	198
Appendix B	199
Self-Report Measures	200
Background Information Questionnaire	201
Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form	203
Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	204
Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale	206
Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples	207
Marital Agendas Protocol	208
Kansas Marital Conflict Scale	209
Ineffective Arguing Inventory	212
Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory.	213
Impression Management Scale	214
Table B-1: Coefficients of Internal Consistency for Measures	215
Appendix C	217
Human Ethics Committee: Approval Form	218
Advertisements for Study-Newspaper	219
Advertisements for Study-Posters	220
Telephone Recruitment Protocol	221
First Follow-up Telephone Protocol	222
Second Follow-up Telephone Protocol	223
Cover Letter For Couples Survey	224
Form for Summary of Results and Draw	225

List of Tables

Table 1:	Correlation Matrix of Variables (Entire Sample; $N=162$)	58
Table 1a:	Correlation Matrix of Variables (Male Sample; $n=64$)	59
Table 1b:	Correlation Matrix of Variables (Female Sample; $n=98$)	60
Table 2:	Correlation Matrix of Variables Controlling for Impression Management scores (Entire Sample; $N=162$)	62
Table 2a:	Correlation Matrix of Variables Controlling for Impression Management scores (Male Sample; $n=64$)	63
Table 2b:	Correlation Matrix of Variables Controlling for Impression Management scores (Female Sample; $n=98$)	64
Table 3:	Correlation Matrix for Demographic Variables (Entire Sample $N=162$)	66
Table 4:	Correlations for all Scales with Demographic Variables (Entire Sample $N=162$)	67
Table 5:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	71
Table 6:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	74
Table 7:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	75
Table 8:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	77
Table 9:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution-Agenda Building	81
Table 10:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution- Arguing Phase	82

Table 11:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution-Negotiation Phase	83
Table 12:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution-Agenda Building Phase	85
Table 13:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Arguing Phase	86
Table 14:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution-Negotiation Phase	87
Table 15:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Ineffective Arguing	88
Table 16:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Ineffective Arguing	89
Table 17:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Conflict Engagement	90
Table 18:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Conflict Engagement	92
Table 19:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Positive Problem Solving	93
Table 20:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Positive Problem Solving	94
Table 21:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Withdrawal	96
Table 22:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Withdrawal ..	97

Table 23:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Compliance	98
Table 24:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Compliance	100
Table 25:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Ineffective Arguing Styles and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	105
Table 26:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Ineffective Arguing Styles and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	107
Table 27:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution - Agenda Building Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	108
Table 28:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution- Agenda Building Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	109
Table 29:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution - Discussion Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	110
Table 30:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution - Discussion Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	111
Table 31:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution - Negotiation Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	112
Table 32:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution- Negotiation Phase and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	113
Table 33:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Conflict Engagement and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction . .	115

Table 34:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Conflict Engagement and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment . .	116
Table 35:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Positive Problem Solving and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	117
Table 36:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Positive Problem Solving and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	118
Table 37:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Withdrawal and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	119
Table 38:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Withdrawal and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	120
Table 39:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Compliance and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction	121
Table 40:	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Compliance and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment	122
Table 41:	Correlation Matrix for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Adjustment Measures (Entire Sample; $N=162$)	127
Table 41a:	Correlation Matrix for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Adjustment Measures (Male Sample; $n=64$)	128
Table 41b:	Correlation Matrix for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Adjustment Measures (Female Sample; $n=98$)	129
Table 42:	Correlations for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution Measures (Entire Sample $N=162$)	132
Table 42a:	Correlations for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution Measures (Male Sample; $n=64$)	134
Table 42b:	Correlations for Subscales of Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution Measures (Female Sample; $n=98$)	135

Table 43:	Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables on Affective Self-Disclosure	138
Table 44:	Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables on Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions	139

List of Figure

Figure 1:	Affective Self-Disclosure on Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Gender	72
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Abstract

Couple communication is an important aspect in relationship quality and has a pervasive impact on most aspects of marital functioning. One specific form of communication, self-disclosure, where individuals express their attitudes, perceptions, and doubts to another, has been described as an integral aspect of intimate relationships, relating to partner's relationship satisfaction. The verbal self-disclosure of affect, although having received less empirical attention than other aspects of couple communication, has been found to relate to relationship satisfaction and adjustment and is implicated in relationship conflict resolution. The current study was designed to investigate self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure and its relation to various aspects of relationship conflict resolution, as well as to relationship satisfaction and adjustment in individuals cohabiting in a heterosexual relationship. These variables were examined with self-report data from 162 individuals (98 women and 64 men) who participated in a mail survey. The measures used to examine the variables of interest included the; Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples, Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale, Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, Dyadic Adjustment Scale- Short Form, Ineffective Arguing Inventory, Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory, Kansas Marital Conflict Scale, Marital Agendas Protocol, and Impression Management subscale of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses demonstrate that affective self-disclosure scores accounted for a significant amount of variance in both relationship quality and various aspects of conflict resolution. In particular, affective self-disclosure scores were positively

related with relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. Individuals who reported engaging in more frequent self-disclosure of feelings to their partner also reported greater satisfaction with their relationship and obtained higher scores on relationship adjustment. As well, affective self-disclosure was positively related to conflict resolution styles described as effective, and negatively related to conflict resolution styles described as ineffective. The more individuals reported that they viewed themselves and their partners as engaging in effective and satisfactory ways of handling relationship conflicts, the more they reported engaging in affective self-disclosures. As well, affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to effective styles and behaviors found at various stages of the conflict discussion and resolution process (i.e., the beginning stages of the conflict where the objective is to get the issues out as they are perceived by each partner; the middle stages of the conflict where the objective is for each partner to argue for their point of view and to understand the areas of disagreement; and the final stages of the conflict where the objective is to reach a mutually satisfactory compromise regarding the problem area). Further, affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to the self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts. The more individuals reported self-disclosing emotions to their partners, the more they reported being able to resolve relationship conflicts more frequently. These preceding relationships were maintained once additional factors, such as impression management scores, gender, and demographic variables were controlled for. In some of the findings, the relation between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction was moderated by the gender of respondent. In particular, affective self-disclosure was related to relationship satisfaction in women, but not in men, and this

relationship varied depending on the affective self-disclosure measure employed. The limitations of the study and implication of these results for future research and marital therapy are discussed.

Introduction

It is inevitable that partners in intimate relationships experience friction, disagreement, and conflict (Bernard, 1964; Kelley, 1979). Research has suggested that there are problems faced by most couples in the course of their relationship, including problems in such areas as money, communication, sex, affection, relatives, children, friends, and jealousy (Storaasli & Markman, 1990).

Starting with Waller's (1938) analysis of the conflict process, the topic of marital conflict has received considerable attention from both researchers and therapists (e.g., Gottman, 1979; Noller & Fitzpatrick 1987; Rands, Levinger, & Mellinger, 1981; Sprey, 1971). Most of this research has indicated that it is not conflict that affects relationship satisfaction, maintenance, and stability, but how such conflict, when it occurs within couples, is handled and resolved (Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993; Julien, Markman, & Lindall, 1989; Markman & Kraft, 1989; Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, & Clements, 1993; Noller & White, 1990; Raush, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974; Storaasli & Markman, 1990). In fact, some longitudinal research findings suggest that many couples benefit from disagreement and conflict, so much so that couples who avoid it appear to be at higher risk for future marital distress and dissatisfaction (Markman, 1991; Notarius, Benson, Sloane, Vanzetti, & Hornkak, 1989; Sayers, Baucom, Sher, Weiss, & Heyman, 1991).

Every year, many marriages end in divorce and many others continue as distressed and dysfunctional relationships. Data from the 1996 Canadian census (Statistics Canada, 1996d) indicate that there has been a 28% increase from 1991 of people who reported they

were divorced. The inability of couples to handle and resolve their relationship problems and conflict when they arise has been viewed as an important factor related to relationship dissatisfaction, maladjustment (Markman, 1981), and relationship dissolution. For instance, longitudinal research examining how couples handle conflict predicts with over 80% accuracy who will divorce and who will remain in a satisfied and nondistressed marital relationship (Markman, 1992). Marital conflict, if handled improperly, may result in verbal and physical abuse (Stets, 1990; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Because marital conflict and distress have a tremendous psychological and economic cost for the people involved, including the children (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994), researchers have attempted to uncover the correlates of conflict resolution and marital quality. This awareness has, without doubt, been one stimulating factor behind many research endeavours in this area and one reason for the tremendous growth of this literature over the past three decades.

One factor that has been well-documented by both family therapists and researchers as an important aspect of both marital quality and relationship conflict resolution is couple communication (see Boland & Follingstad, 1987 for a review). To clarify, marital quality has been operationalized and measured in various ways (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). For purposes of this document, marital quality will be defined as, a) relationship satisfaction (i.e., one's overall subjectively-based, nonbehavioral overall evaluation of their relationship with their partner) and b) relationship adjustment (i.e., one's overall evaluation of the specific behaviors and activities of a couple's relationship).

Communication has a pervasive impact on nearly all aspects of couple relations and

processes, such as decision making, family planning, and household labour; moreover, communication difficulties are among the common complaints presented by couples who seek marital therapy (Baucom & Adams, 1987; Geiss & O'Leary, 1981; Hahlweg, Revenstorf, & Schindler, 1984; Jacobson & Holtzworth-Monroe, 1986). Couple communication is described as an important aspect related to dealing with relationship conflicts (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979; Stuart, 1980). For this reason, therapists and clinicians commonly agree on the importance of promoting communication skills in both marital and premarital couples, from both a preventive (Floyd, Markman, Kelly, Blumberg, & Stanley, 1995; Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Storaasli, 1988; Markman, Renick et al, 1993) and remedial point of view (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979).

One specific form of communication, self-disclosure, where individuals express their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, opinions and doubts to another, has been described as an integral aspect of intimate relationships (Chelune, 1975; Cosby, 1973; Derlega & Berg, 1987; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Waring & Chelune, 1983). Within the marital relationship, self-disclosure has been identified as an important factor related to each partner's satisfaction with their relationship (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Merves-Okin, Amidon, & Bernt, 1991; Waring & Chelune, 1983) and is implicated in promoting more effective relationship conflict resolution (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980).

Self-disclosure of affect and feelings, although having received less empirical attention than other forms of couple communication, has also been found to be related to relationship satisfaction and adjustment (Davidson, Balswick & Halverson, 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992), and has been implicated in the effectiveness of couple's conflict resolution

following marital therapy (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Snyder & Wills, 1989). Several therapy programs, for instance, focus on the importance of affective exploration and verbal expression of feelings in promoting couple satisfaction, intimacy, and relationship conflict resolution (e.g., Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Snyder & Wills, 1989). According to some theorists and clinicians, it is not emotions that cause conflict and discord in relationships, but it is the inhibited or suppressed expression of affect that results in ineffective communication and poor conflict resolution and relationship distress (e.g., Wile, 1981).

Despite the importance that researchers and clinicians have attributed to the role of affective self-disclosure in conflict resolution, little empirical work has been carried out in this area. The empirical literature on conflict resolution in couples has examined various communication styles and their relationship to couple satisfaction and adjustment. This literature has not, however, examined couple's verbal affective self-disclosure and its relation to conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction and adjustment. The self-disclosure literature relates this form of communication to marital satisfaction and adjustment, but does not, however, examine self-disclosure of affect in relation to couples' conflict resolution. Furthermore, outcome studies on marital therapy, for instance, do not directly address the relation between verbal expressions of affect and relationship conflict resolution. Whether or not verbal affective self-disclosure is related to relationship conflict resolution, for the most part, is not apparent from the existing findings, as it has not been empirically examined in a direct fashion.

Research is needed to examine the nature and process of affective self-disclosure and

its relation to couple's conflict resolution. This project was designed to address the following issues. The first aim, using individuals who have been cohabiting with their partners, was to examine their self-reports of affective self-disclosure and how this relates to self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. The second aim was to examine how self-reports of affective self-disclosure relate to aspects of relationship conflict resolution; such as to various behaviors and styles used, various stages of discussing and negotiating problems that arise, and self-reports of resolution of conflicts and frequency of resolution of conflicts.

To better understand the existing research on the relationship between affective self-disclosure, relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and conflict resolution, and to set up the basis for this study's hypotheses, several research areas are reviewed. The first part of the document examines the empirical research on communication and marital quality, with a focus specifically on the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Cross-sectional and longitudinal research on communication styles and relationship conflict resolution are then reviewed. Finally, outcome research on marital therapy approaches is reviewed.

Communication and Marital Satisfaction

Starting with the classic works by Terman, Bittenweiser, Ferguson, Johnson, and Wilson, (1938) and Burgess and Wallin (1953) on what distinguishes a happy marriage from an unhappy one, there is much research showing a strong relationship between the quality and quantity of marital communication styles and relationship satisfaction. In a review of the research conducted in the 1960s, Lewis and Spanier (1979) concluded that marital quality

was clearly related to the communication skills of spouses, including elements such as self-disclosure, understanding, and empathy. Others have also found that well-adjusted couples usually discuss all matters, stop the flow of communication less often, use more words with a private meaning, do not criticize their partners, and express their true feelings (Bienvenu, 1970). More recent empirical studies, as well, indicate that couples who are distressed and dissatisfied experience more communication difficulties than do couples who are not distressed (Christensen, 1987). In general, these studies have consistently indicated that happy and unhappy couples differ in their communication, particularly in how they handle conflict.

Self-disclosure is a form of communication that has been shown to be related to marital satisfaction and adjustment and is implicated in conflict resolution. The following section will review the literature on self-disclosure.

Marital Communication: Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is the process by which individuals share information concerning their attitudes, thoughts, and perceptions to another person, thereby allowing personal and private information to surface in that relationship that would otherwise not be revealed in the course of everyday interactions (Cosby, 1973; Derlega & Cacoon, 1975; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Gerard, 1971). Self-disclosure includes any information exchange, and can be operationalized as "any verbal message that formally begins with the word "I" (e.g., "I think", "I feel"), or any other verbal message about the self (Derlega, Margolin, & Instead, 1987, p. 206). Self-disclosure is one type of communication that has been described as a key factor in the development and maintenance of intimate relationships (Altman & Taylor,

1973; Derlega & Cacoon, 1975; Derlega, 1987; Waring & Chelune, 1983). Studies on the role of this variable in marital relationships have been inspired by the early theoretical works of Jourard (1971) on the importance of self-disclosure for mental and physical well-being. Jourard (1971) described self-disclosure as an important means for decreasing interpersonal distance and a prerequisite for developing intimate relationships. Among other perspectives that have been described on relationship development (Berger, 1988), Altman and Taylor (1973), as well, have tried to describe the importance of self-disclosure in the formation of intimate relationships. They suggest that the more individuals engage in extensive self-disclosures, the less ambiguity and uncertainty there is in the relationship, and the more rewarded and satisfied they will feel in their relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Within the marital relationship, numerous investigators have found that the sharing of personal information appears to be related to marital satisfaction and adjustment (e.g., Boland & Follingshed, 1987, for review).

The two most common methodological designs employed in the marital self-disclosure literature are the administration of self-report questionnaires asking participants to provide their perceptions of satisfaction with their relationship as well as perceptions of their self-disclosure styles, and behavioral observation of couples, where their communication styles are videotaped and coded using verbatim transcripts of their dialogue. Although varying in the adequacy of their assessment measures and soundness of their research designs, the studies, for the most part, have found a positive association between amounts of self-disclosure reported and perceived marital satisfaction and marital adjustment (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Bogard & Spilka, 1996; Boland, & Follingstad, 1987; Chelune, Sultan, Vosk,

Ogden, & Waring, 1984; Chelune, Waring, Vosk, Sultan, & Ogden, 1984; Chelune et al., 1985; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981; Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980; Merves-Okin, Amidon, & Bernt, 1991; Waring, 1981; Waring & Chelune, 1983; for exceptions, see Shapiro & Swenson, 1969). For the most part, these findings appear to support Brehm's (1992) contention that "the more people self-disclose to each other and share personal information, the more progress is made in their relationship and the better the quality of that relationship" (Brehm, 1992, p. 206).

As well, demographic variables such as number of children and duration of marital relationship have also been found to relate to self-disclosure. For instance, studies have found that reports of self-disclosure decreased with age, length of the marital relationship, (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Burke et al., 1976; Hendrick, 1981), and with the number of children present (Antill & Cotton, 1987). Sex role differences (Snell, Belk, & Hawkins, 1986) and gender differences have also been found in the type of information self-disclosed (Rubin, Hill, Peplau, & Dunkel-Schetter, 1980), and in the quantity (amount) of information self-disclosed, where women report increased amounts of self-disclosure compared to men (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Dindia & Allen, 1992).

Within the marital relationship, self-disclosure has been described as an important variable in the process of building a strong relationship foundation that will not only enhance each partner's satisfaction with the relationship, but also promote more effective resolution of conflicts within the relationship (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980). These implied causal relationships, however, have not directly been examined, as most of the findings from the current literature have employed either self-report or behavioral observation measures in

a cross-sectional design. Furthermore, though there are implications in the literature of the relation between self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution, there does not exist any systematic and direct investigation of this association.

One form of self-disclosure that has received less empirical attention in relation to marital quality is the amount of self-disclosure of affect, that is, the direct verbal communication of feelings (i.e., love, anger, sadness, fear, etc) expressed to one's intimate partner. The few studies that have attempted to examine this construct have demonstrated that self-reports of self-disclosures of feelings (i.e., the amount of affective self-disclosure reported) are related to higher self-reports of marital satisfaction (Burke, Weir, & Harrison, 1976; Davidson, et al., 1983; Levinger & Senn, 1967; Vera & Betz, 1992; Vito, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, Pinsent, & Hunsley, 1993). For the most part, individuals who reported engaging in more frequent self-disclosure of feelings to their partner also reported greater satisfaction with their couple relationship. Davidson and colleagues (1983), moreover, found that high rates of affective self-disclosure (i.e., higher quantity of self-reports of affective self-disclosure) as well as perceived reciprocal self-disclosure (i.e., the more self-disclosures partners perceive receiving from their partner), were associated with high levels of marital adjustment. Davidson and colleagues (1983), as well, found that the greater the discrepancy in partner's affective self-disclosure (whether individuals indicated receiving either more or less disclosures than they gave), the lower was an individual's self-reported marital adjustment.

Researchers have also found demographic variables to be related to affective self-disclosure, such as length of the couple relationship and number of children present (Vito et

al., 1993). Gender differences in the amount of self-disclosure have also been found, where women report engaging in more affective self-disclosures than do men (Snell et al., 1988; 1989), and report self-disclosing different emotions than do men (Buntaine & Costenbader, 1997; Snell, et al., 1988, 1989). For instance, studies by Snell and colleagues (1988, 1989) found that women were more willing than men to self-disclose feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, and fear to their partners. Men, on the other hand, were more willing to report disclosing more positively-keyed feelings such as happiness and love. Some earlier studies, as well, have found that a high disclosure of negative and unpleasant feelings appears to be negatively correlated with marital satisfaction (Burke et al., 1976; Levinger & Senn, 1967). In a more recent study, Walsh and colleagues (1993) explored sequential communication patterns of 56 clinically distressed couples who were asked to express their feelings and thoughts during a video-taped interaction task. Results demonstrated that the valence (i.e., positive or negative) of the partner's self-disclosures had more of an impact on their partner's subsequent responses than did the frequency of affective self-disclosures. In other words, partners tended to respond more negatively if their spouse had just disclosed negative feelings about them or the marital relationship.

The preceding studies, for the most part, have not systematically investigated the relation between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution. Recently Arellano and Markman (1995) described the validation results of a self-report measure to assess specific communication skills that couples may use during conflict discussions. Communication skills included: validation, levelling, feedback, focusing, as well as emotional expressivity. This study provides preliminary evidence that emotional

expressivity is related to conflict resolution measures (Arellano & Markman, 1995).

Summary and Evaluation of the Marital Self-Disclosure Literature

Studies, for the most part, have found a positive association between self-report measures of general self-disclosure and perceived marital satisfaction and adjustment. The research demonstrates, further, that self-disclosure of affect and feelings is related to self-reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Couples who report higher rates of affective self-disclosure (i.e., greater quantity of affective self-disclosure) tend to report experiencing greater relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Although most studies indicate a correlation between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, several methodological limitations exist, which are outlined in the following paragraphs. Further, despite the implied association between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution, there currently exists a lack of empirical attention paid to this relationship.

First, some of the studies suffer from the failure either to choose an existing standardized measure of self-disclosure or to demonstrate psychometric adequacy of their new measure before their specific investigation. With notable exceptions (Davidson et. al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992), these studies used either study-specific affective self-disclosure measures (Levinger & Senn, 1967; Walsh et al., 1993), or assessed only one or two items to reflect disclosure of feelings, or items believed to be measuring marital satisfaction (Burke et al., 1976; Levinger & Senn, 1967), which, in fact, were only measuring couples' levels of agreement on various relationship issues. Although agreement on various relationship issues may be measures of relationship satisfaction, they are conceptually different variables.

Several studies, further, used an array of "problem" areas, as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, Spanier, 1976), as an index of marital satisfaction. This is not surprising, as many researchers, in assessing marital quality, confuse marital satisfaction with marital adjustment (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). Some studies use a heterogeneous sample with partners varying in age, duration of their relationship, living arrangements, and presence of children. In the study by Vera and Betz (1992), for instance, 80% of the couples in their sample were dating but not cohabiting. Many earlier investigations, in addition to utilizing a varied sample, neglected to control for variables that could influence the relation between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, including, for example, the length of time couples have been together, age of respondent, the number of children, education and income levels.

Another important methodological limitation found in this research is that, with the exception of one study (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980), social desirability of responding has not been controlled for. Although Bogard and Spilka (1996) included a social desirability scale, they failed to report the findings obtained using this scale. For the most part, it remains unclear as to the possible influence social desirability may have in the relationship between self-disclosure scores and relationship satisfaction. Given the self-report questionnaire designs that are used in this area of research, which ask participants to provide their perceptions of personal and sensitive areas, such as their relationship, their feelings about their partner, and various aspects of their communication styles, it would seem particularly important to consider the possible influence of social desirability in their responses. A recent study by Hunsley, Vito, Pinsent, James, and Lefebvre (1996), for instance, examined

whether self-report measures of dyadic relationships are influenced by impression management biases. Impression management is one aspect of social desirability that measures one's tendency to adopt a biased response set to enhance one's self-image and to present oneself in a favorable way. This is also the aspect of social desirability that marital researchers who employ self-report designs are most concerned with. Using the Impression Management subscale of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991), Hunsley and colleagues (1996) found that although biases in responding did not reduce the magnitude of the correlations between measures of marital quality (i.e., relationship adjustment and satisfaction) and other relationship measures (e.g., relationship beliefs, conflict resolution, adaptability, and cohesion), impression management biases were found to be significantly associated with many of the partners' reports about their relationship, particularly among male participants.

In a study that did control for individual response biases in reported self-disclosure levels, Jorgensen and Gaudy (1980) found that once a favorability index was partialled out, a positive linear relationship was still found between quantity of self-disclosure of thoughts and beliefs and marital happiness, although this relationship was lessened. With respect to the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, the possible influence of social desirability has been ignored. It has been demonstrated, for the most part, that respondents believe others will have negative reactions if the respondent engages in more intimate self-disclosures (Goodpaster & Hewitt, 1992), and there appears to be a perception that certain emotions may be more acceptable to disclose than others (Shimmanoff, 1985a; 1985b; Smith, Ulch, Cameron, Cumberland,

Musgrave, & Tremblay, 1989; Zillman, Weaver, Mundorf, & Aust, 1986). Therefore, given the self-report questionnaire designs that are used in this area of research, which ask participants to provide their perceptions and feelings of personal and highly sensitive topics, it is important to consider the possible influence of social desirability in responding to these personal questions. For instance, respondents might tend to portray themselves or their relationship in a favorable manner, either by under reporting undesirable behaviors or feelings (i.e., negatively-keyed feelings such as anger, fear, or dissatisfaction) or by over reporting desirable behaviors or feelings (i.e., satisfaction, effective conflict resolution styles).

The preceding issues, for the most part, bring into question the accuracy of the participants responses as well as the results obtained from the preceding studies. It is difficult to discern if the relation between couple self-disclosure, particularly the self-reports of self-disclosure of affect, and relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, is an artifact of impression management (i.e., the tendency to portray oneself in a favorable manner), as this issue has received relatively little attention in the methodological designs used in marital communication research.

More importantly, the studies in this area have not systematically investigated the relation between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution. The study by Arellano and Markman (1995), for instance, demonstrated limited evidence regarding the relation of affective self-disclosure skills and relationship conflict resolution. However, several important limitations were present in this study. First, the subscale used to measure emotional expressivity appears to be assessing more than one construct (i.e., items for the

subscale appear to measure self-expression as well as perceptions of one's partner's self-expressions), and it is limited in the quantity of affects being expressed (i.e., the items only assess expressivity around feeling proud, disappointed, happy, and pleased). Further, the extremely small sample used is another limitation, making the integrity of their findings questionable.

Despite the lack of attention to the role of this construct in marital functioning, both researchers and therapists agree on the importance of encouraging the disclosure of affect and feelings in an effort to facilitate couples's conflict resolution (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a). However, the connections between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution, relationship satisfaction, and relationship adjustment remain to be investigated in an empirical fashion.

Couple Communication and Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution research conducted to date focuses mainly on the communication strategies and problem-solving skills couples employ in resolving conflicts that arise in their relationship. This literature indicates that couples who can manage and resolve their conflicts in a constructive manner experience more relationship satisfaction and adjustment than do couples who use ineffective or destructive styles to resolve their conflicts. Conflict-resolution has been operationalized in various ways in the psychological marital literature. For instance, conflict-resolution has been defined as referring to either communication or behavioral patterns/styles displayed by partners during conflictual discussions (e.g., "launching personal insults", "withdrawing", "being too compliant"), or as behavioral/communication styles displayed during different phases/stages of a conflictual

discussion. Examples of different stages of the conflict discussions include; as the discussion is about to begin (e.g., "Do you both begin to understand each other's feelings relatively quickly"?, "Is your partner willing to really hear what you want to communicate"?); or as the conflictual discussion is coming to an end (e.g., "Do you and your partner end up with very little resolved at the end of the discussion"?). Conflict resolution has also been defined as an overall affectively based evaluation (satisfaction level) of the conflict resolution process (e.g., "Do you and your partner bring the matter to a conclusion that is satisfactory for both of you"?). Hence, marital conflict resolution has not been defined as a unidimensional construct, and as a consequence, the measures that have been developed to measure it also reflect this multidimensional aspect.

There are two main methodological approaches that have been employed by researchers in this area: self-report questionnaires and behavioral observations. In studies that involve behavioral observations, the researcher usually introduces a task designed to generate discussion representative of the couple's typical communication. The distinct advantage of this approach is the direct collection of a sample of the couple's communication, in particular, the assessment of sequences of couples' interactional styles during conflict discussions. Though these behavioral observations have good validity and interrater reliability, as well as providing a comprehensive coverage of communication variables, they are often costly and time-consuming procedures, and obtain data/behaviors that are sometimes specific to the situation, therefore lacking generalizability (O'Leary, 1990). Some have even found observation methods to be more successful at identifying negative communication behaviors that differentiate distressed from nondistressed couples,

than they have been at identifying positive communication behaviors (Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Schapp, 1984). Self-report measures, on the other hand, ask participants for their perceptions regarding various aspects of their communication style with their partner and their level of satisfaction with their relationship. They are advantageous in terms of ease and speed of administration, but vary in quality in terms of validity, reliability, and scope of coverage of the different dimensions of marital relationships (O'Leary, 1990), including the ability to tap the internal processes involved in communication and conflict management. Self-report measures have been viewed by some as appropriate measures, particularly if the interest is to examine the general amount/degree of communication styles (i.e., self-disclosure) in an ongoing relationship that would be more difficult to capture by observing short behavioral segments. The following is an overview of some of the general findings in the area of marital communication and conflict resolution.

The traditional approach to this research over the past twenty years has assumed that so called negative communication (e.g., disagreement, defensiveness, compliance, stubbornness, withdrawal, exchanges of anger, criticism), as defined by investigators, is bad, whereas positive communication (e.g., validation, compromise, approval, agreement) is good for marital satisfaction and conflict resolution (for reviews see Baucom & Adams, 1987; Weiss & Heyman, 1990). For the most part, findings from cross sectional studies regarding the link between conflict resolution styles/strategies and marital satisfaction have been consistent in indicating that each partner's marital satisfaction is positively related to the frequency with which each partner uses constructive strategies to resolve conflicts (i.e., agreement, compromise, humour) and negatively related to the frequency with which each

spouse uses destructive strategies to resolve conflict (i.e., withdrawal, defensiveness, conflict engagement). This pattern of findings is consistently found in both behavioral observations (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993; Noller, Feeney, Bonnell, & Callan, 1994), and self-report questionnaire data (Christensen, 1988; Heavey et al., 1993; Huston & Vangelisti, 1991; Noller et al., 1994). Vincent, Weiss, and Birchler (1975), for instance, found that distressed couples (i.e., couples who score low on relationship adjustment measures) demonstrated a significantly greater proportion of negative problem-solving communication and less positive communication than did nondistressed couples (i.e., couples who score high on relationship adjustment measures). Others have found that distressed couples, while engaged in conflictual discussions, demonstrated more reciprocity of negative communication as compared to nondistressed couples (Billings, 1979), and a greater likelihood to rely on criticism in attempting to influence their partner during conflict situations (Koren, Carlton, & Shaw, 1980). Furthermore, several researchers have reported that compared to nondistressed couples, distressed couples engaged in more destructive forms of communication, such as wanting to have the final say on a conflictual matter, being determined to get their own way, insulting and criticizing their partner, and getting angry in cases of disagreement (Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988). Moreover, a commonly observed aspect of distressed couples' destructive communication was the avoidance of conflict, which took the form of silent withdrawal, giving in to avoid conflict and smiling without feeling particularly friendly or close. In contrast, nondistressed couples reported that they understood each other and asked each other for advice when conflicts did arise in their relationship (Schaap et al., 1988).

Studies have also examined the relation between specific communication patterns and processes to marital conflict discussions and relationship quality. Ting-Tomey (1983), for instance, examined the verbal sequential process of conflict resolution in distressed and nondistressed couples and found that couples who reported high levels of marital adjustment were primarily characterized by patterns of summarization, paraphrasing, validation, and clarification. Distressed couples, on the other hand, demonstrated reciprocal patterns of either both partners confronting, one confronting and the other defending, and one partner defending and the other complaining. It has been shown, as well, that distressed couples, when compared to nondistressed couples, enter into more negative sequences of interaction by reciprocating the partner's negative affect or by responding more negatively to the partner (Alberts & Driscoll, 1992; Weiss & Heyman, 1990). For instance, Alberts and Driscoll (1992) found that distressed couples, when compared to nondistressed couples during conflict discussions, were twice as likely to engage in unresponsive (i.e., denying partner's responses, avoiding) or escalating (i.e., expanding the topic) episodes. Further, a frequently noted interaction pattern in distressed couples during discussions is that in which one spouse pressures the other with demands, complaints, and criticisms, while the other partner withdraws (either physically or emotionally) from the conflictual discussion (Christensen & Sherk, 1991).

Studies have also found that certain areas of conflict are more closely related to relationship satisfaction and adjustment (Kurdek, 1994b; Storaasli & Markman, 1990; Vangelisti & Houston, 1994). Storaasli and Markman (1990), for instance, found couples' adjustment level was most strongly negatively associated with the intensity of conflict over

issues of communication and sex. These researchers found that for women, their relationship adjustment level was also negatively related to conflict over issues concerning relatives and jealousy in addition to conflict over communication and sex. In a more recent study, areas of conflict most associated with relationship dissatisfaction, consistent with Storaasli and Markman's (1990) findings, were conflicts around relationship power (i.e., communication styles, friends, chores, leisure time) and intimacy (defined as lack of affection and sex), and these appeared to be similar for gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples (Kurdek, 1994b). Another difference between distressed and nondistressed couples is the frequency with which they have a conflict about a certain topic, rather than the conflict area itself (Schaap et al., 1988). For instance, whereas nondistressed couples reported that they sometimes have conflicts about certain topics, distressed couples reported that they very often have conflicts about the same topic. It is not surprising, then, that couples seeking therapy report significantly more unresolved conflicts than do nondistressed couples (Birchler & Webb, 1977).

There also appear to be gender differences in resolving conflicts in couple relationships (Buunk, Schaap, & Prevoo, 1990; Markman & Kraft, 1989; Schaap et al., 1988; White, 1989). In a study by Buunk and colleagues (1990), based on self-reports by men and women, women viewed themselves as expressing their negative emotions more than their partner did and attempting to resolve problems through open discussion of feelings. Men, on the other hand, perceived themselves as trying to avoid an emotional discussion, preferring to smooth over differences, and being more willing to compromise (Buunk et al., 1990). These gender differences in communication patterns have been supported to a

varying degree by other studies (Gottman, 1983; Notarius & Markman, 1987).

For the most part, only a few studies have examined the relationship between communication style and satisfaction with the resolution of conflict discussions. Koren, Carlton, and Shaw (1980), for instance, observed couples in a series of conflict tasks and had them rate their satisfaction with these discussions. They reported that observers' coding of "criticism" styles of communication negatively predicted satisfaction with the conflict discussion, whereas observers' coding of "responsive" styles of communication positively predicted satisfaction with the conflict discussion. As well, they observed that solution proposal for the conflict predicted the attainment of conflict resolution but not mutual satisfaction with the resolution of the conflict. In a more recent study, Heavey and colleagues (1993) found that observer ratings of demand/withdraw interactions and husband and wife demanding behaviors were negatively associated with immediate satisfaction with the outcome of the discussion.

Longitudinal research in the area of marital conflict, though not always consistent, reveals that some of the predictors of current levels of marital satisfaction found in the preceding cross-sectional studies do not necessarily generalize to the prediction of change in marital satisfaction over time (e.g., Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Markman, 1984; Smith, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1991). It appears that certain styles of negative communication displayed by nondistressed couples may be effective in the long run in resolving marital conflict (i.e., engagement in the conflict), whereas other negative communication patterns (i.e., defensiveness, withdrawing from the interaction, criticizing) may have a destructive effect on the relationship (Christensen & Shenk, 1991; Haefner, Notarius, & Pellegrini, 1991;

Huston & Vangelisti, 1991; Krokoff, 1991; Markman, 1991; Sayers et. al., 1991; Sher & Weiss, 1991; Sher & Baucom, 1993; Smith, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1991). For the most part, these studies demonstrate that declines in marital satisfaction over time are predicted by husbands' withdrawal (expressed as less criticism), defensiveness, wives' complying with their husbands more, and greater reciprocation of partner's positive behaviors during conflict discussions (Filsinger & Thoma, 1988; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Julien, et al., 1989).

Similar to the studies employing cross-sectional designs, longitudinal research also demonstrates that affective features of communication distinguish distressed from non-distressed couples. Nonverbal interaction behaviors, for instance, reflecting resignation, sadness, and disengagement, typified by "quiet", "sluggish", "silent", and "weary" behaviors predict lower marital satisfaction 18 and 30 months later (Smith et al., 1991).

Summary and Evaluation of the Conflict Resolution Literature

For the most part, the research suggests that couples who report higher levels of marital satisfaction display more positive communication and problem solving behaviors, whereas distressed couples, who report lower levels of relationship satisfaction and adjustment, utilize more negative and destructive strategies during discussion of problem issues. Further, it appears that positive communication leads to immediate satisfaction with a conflict discussion, whereas negative communication, such as avoidance, and demand/withdraw interaction leads to dissatisfaction.

These studies, for the most part, assume that all forms of negative communication are bad and destructive. From this research, investigators have concluded that one of the most important discriminators among distressed and nondistressed relationships is the degree and

quality of negative communication expressed (i.e., complaining, criticizing) during marital conflict. As one result, marital therapists have found it important to teach distressed couples how to de-escalate negative communication in an effort to improve their marital relationship. In other words, it is assumed that for couples to experience satisfaction and happiness in their marital relationship, they must gain control over the expression of negative affect (Gottman & Levenson, 1986).

An additional finding from this cross-sectional research is that couples with poor or ineffective problem-solving strategies appear to have more unresolved conflicts, often regarding the same problem issue. The higher frequency of conflict about a certain topic among distressed partners can be interpreted as an indication that the conflict situation remains unresolved. This can be due to distressed couples avoiding/withdrawing from discussion of conflict areas, which precludes the resolution of these conflicts, or they may discuss conflict areas in negative and aversive ways that not only prevents the resolution of the conflict but might also generate negative affect such as anger, irritation, frustration, and resentment (Markman, 1981). Negative affect that can result from such inhibition of feelings related to the conflict, then, can increase the probability that the conflict, and the negative feelings associated with it, might extend to other areas in their relationship and potentially give rise to new conflicts. Markman (1991b), for instance, suggested that, "to the extent that marital disagreements are not handled well, unresolved negative feelings start to build up, fuelling destructive patterns of marital interaction and eventually eroding and attacking the positive aspects of the relationship" (Markman, 1991b, p. 422).

There exist various methodological limitations in the research on the association

between marital communication and conflict resolution. The sample sizes of most of the longitudinal studies are rather small (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Haefner et al., 1991; Noller et al., 1994) and the data collected from these studies are not always derived from a homogeneous sample. Many studies collect data from samples comprised of couples varying widely in marital duration (assessing couples shortly after they were married versus assessing couples who have been married for a longer period of time) (e.g., Huston & Vangelisti, 1991; Noller et al., 1994). Testing couples at various stages of their relationship can contribute to inconsistent findings, as research has shown that marital communication during conflict can be influenced by developmental, life stage, and cohort influences (Zietlow & Sillars, 1988). This finding raises the issue of the need to statistically control for relationship variables, including the length of time people have been living together, the number of children they have, etc., or, if feasible, to utilize a relatively homogeneous sample of couples.

An additional issue concerns the assessment of marital conflict resolution. The longitudinal studies, for the most part, examined marital satisfaction and adjustment concurrently and at a later time period as an outcome variable in determining marital conflict resolution. An outcome measure examining partners' actual satisfaction with conflict resolution, or attaining resolution of a problem discussion, is not included. Conflict resolution is assessed indirectly, often only by responses provided on subscales of various marital satisfaction and/or adjustment measures, and only examining self-reported satisfaction with the couple relationship. One study that did include a measure examining partner's satisfaction with their in-session conflict discussion demonstrated that satisfaction

with conflict discussion is related to overall relationship satisfaction and communication during the conflict discussion (Haefner et al., 1991). These researchers also found the relationship between satisfaction with the conflict discussion and overall relationship satisfaction was different for husbands and wives (Haefner et al., 1991). These data, however, were collected from a relatively small sample size of approximately 20 couples. The few studies that have assessed this variable as separate have obtained results that are not consistent between the different studies. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain how satisfaction with couple relationship might relate, if at all, to satisfaction with the management and resolution of the conflict area.

A related but separate issue concerns the assessment of couple communication and conflict resolution. The studies in this area have attempted to examine the couple's ability to resolve conflicts by assessing a sample of their communication behavior during conflictual discussions and obtaining self-reports of their satisfaction either with their relationship or with the conflict discussion. Couples' abilities to resolve their conflicts, for the most part, have not been directly measured. This is important to consider, as findings suggest that certain styles of communication may be related to resolution of conflictual discussions but not necessarily to the couple's satisfaction with the resolution of their conflict discussions (Koren et al., 1980). As this finding has not received further investigation, it is unclear whether or not communication related to satisfaction with conflict discussion is necessarily similar to communication related to the resolution of that conflict.

Another problem inherent in this literature, as already described, is the multidimensional operationalization and measurement of the conflict resolution construct.

Because this construct has not been used in a unidimensional manner, different studies have used different measures that assess one or many aspects of this construct, often times not clearly stating in an explicit manner what aspect of conflict resolution is being measured. This not only relates to difficulties when trying to compare results across different studies, but this also leads to confusion regarding what is meant by the term "conflict resolution". Because of the multidimensional definitions and assessment instruments used for this construct, it is difficult to discern whether communication styles related to one phase/stage of conflict resolution (i.e., when partners are beginning to discuss a problem) are related to other aspects of relationship conflict resolution (i.e., satisfaction with the manner conflicts are eventually resolved or negotiated).

Furthermore, although various communication styles have been investigated in relation to conflict resolution and satisfaction, verbal affective self-disclosure (i.e., "I feel sad when we argue"; "I feel hurt when you do this"; "I feel upset when you yell at me) has not been investigated in relation to relationship conflict resolution. Some studies that utilize a longitudinal design, for instance, examine affective communication in the form of nonverbal behavior (i.e., smile, frown, cries, anger), and relate this to some outcome (i.e., marital satisfaction and/or marital adjustment). One study that included a verbal self-disclosure measure did not include the data in their final analyses as they reported infrequent occurrence of the self-disclosure behavior and no significant relation of this variable with either marital satisfaction or satisfaction with conflict discussion (Haefner et al., 1991). This study suffered from several methodological limitations, however, including the use of a very small sample size (fewer than 27 couples). Therefore, whether or not affective self-

disclosure is related to relationship conflict resolution, is not apparent.

The preceding sections have briefly summarized and evaluated the research literature in the area of communication, conflict resolution, and relationship quality. The clinical literature, that is, marital therapy outcome studies, is another avenue that provides essential information on the relationship between communication, resolving relationship problems, and relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Because of the close link between communication, conflict resolution, and marital quality, one of the main goals of marital therapy approaches have been to facilitate the resolution of conflicts between partners. In the next section, I briefly review marital therapy approaches that have been used, with a specific focus on approaches that describe the importance of communication of feelings and affect in an effort to enhance relationship satisfaction and promote effective conflict resolution. Given that the Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988) approach to marital therapy is more closely formulated on the assumption that the expression of affect is essential to outcome in therapy, the review focuses more closely on the outcome research on EFT conducted to date that is relevant to this study.

Marital Therapy

The marital therapy literature has until recently focused mainly on outcome studies that have used either behavioral or cognitive-behavioral approaches. Behavioral marital therapy (BMT) has primarily focused on promoting positive behavior change, negotiation, and problem solving skills (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). BMT, for the most part, teaches couples skills to identify and eliminate nonconstructive and aversive elements of communication and to learn and practice more constructive interactions in an effort to

increase marital accord and problem-solving (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). According to BMT approaches, couple communication, then, is modified as it occurs by behavioral shaping and contracting procedures. Controlled outcome studies have shown BMT, when compared to control groups, to result in decreases in negative behavior and marital discord, and increases in positive communication (Jacobson, Follette, Revenstorf, Baucom, Hahlweg, & Margolin, 1984; Hahlweg & Markman, 1988).

In the last decade, some marital therapy approaches have begun to include an emotionally focused experiential approach to facilitate marital satisfaction, and intimacy (Baucom, Sayers, & Sher, 1990; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a; 1985b; Snyder & Wills, 1989). Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996), for instance, emphasizes the communication patterns between partners that maintain and reinforce a dysfunctional interactional pattern and the expression of previously unexpressed affective states (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951; Greenberg & Safran, 1984a; 1986) that are hypothesized to be crucial for the process of change, both in the partners' style of interaction and each partner's experience of the relationship. In contrast to BMT, no effort is made at the systemic training of communication skills or at the mastery of such skills through active rehearsal, behavior-modification, or shaping procedures.

Among other assumptions, EFT suggests that increases in the degree of emotional expressiveness that result in new levels of self-disclosure lead to a changed perception of self by the other and to more affiliative behavior on the part of the partner (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988). As spouses become accessible to each other by verbally expressing

underlying feelings of vulnerability, (e.g., sadness, fear, anger, love), they become more aware of each other. They are then able to be more responsive, which then promotes the growth of trust, new affiliative behaviors, and new positive interaction styles (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 1996). In contrast, a partner's failure to be aware of, and express feelings and needs, impedes communication and the ability to resolve conflicts (Greenberg & Johnson, 1986a; 1986b; 1988).

Other marital interventions focusing on the verbal exploration and expression of feelings include insight oriented marital therapy (IOMT) (Snyder, Mangrum, & Wills, 1993; Snyder & Wills, 1989; Snyder Wills, & Grady-Fletcher, 1991) and emotional expressiveness training (Baucom et al., 1990). Elements that are common to these strategies, like some of those used in EFT, are the encouragement of partners to focus on and express feelings arising from the marital interaction in an effort to increase responsiveness and change. Similar to EFT, there is no attempt to systematically train communication skills, negotiation skills, or problem solving skills. Given that the EFT approach to marital therapy is more closely formulated on the assumption that the expression of affect is essential to outcome in therapy, the following paragraph briefly describes the research on EFT that is relevant to this study.

Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples (EFT)

There have been several outcome studies on EFT (Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994; Dessaulles, 1991; Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; James, 1991; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a; 1985b), all of which have demonstrated EFT to be effective in increasing self-reports of marital adjustment and satisfaction, and a reduction in target complaints. In some studies,

the authors also reported that the EFT approach seemed to have a positive effect on couples' abilities to negotiate conflicts and change specific behaviors (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a).

Research has also focused on identifying in-therapy processes that relate to change in outcome using EFT (Johnson & Greenberg, 1988; Greenberg, Ford, Alden, & Johnson, 1993). Johnson and Greenberg (1988), for instance, compared peak and poor sessions of a 20 minute conflict resolution episode in therapy and found that the peak sessions were characterized by deep emotional experiencing and expression and more affiliative interactions between the partners compared to the poor sessions. In a more recent study, Greenberg and colleagues (1993) found that affective self-disclosures in sessions led to more affiliative responses by the partner. These studies, for the most part, suggested that high levels of emotional experiencing and affiliative, accepting behaviors are associated with successful outcome in EFT for couples. When asked what factors relate to change processes in therapy, couples described the importance of expressing underlying feelings, acquiring understanding and clarification, and receiving validation for the experience in an effort to change interactional patterns and enhance relationship intimacy (Greenberg, James, & Conry, 1988).

Summary and Evaluation of the EFT Studies

Outcome studies have, for the most part, shown marital intervention programs to be successful at increasing marital satisfaction, communication, and goal attainment, and decreasing target complaints. For the most part, in every outcome study where a treatment has been compared to a control group, the treatment outperformed the control group on the

dependent variables of interest.

In general, the outcome research on EFT for couples has found this approach to be effective in increasing marital adjustment, intimacy, goal attainment, and decreasing target complaints. The authors also suggest that EFT has an effect on couple's ability to negotiate and change specific behaviors in an effort to resolve conflicts (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a), in spite of the fact that these areas were not focused on in terms of skill training. As Johnson and Greenberg (1985a) suggested, it may be that increases in trust, responsiveness, and expression of feelings, which are the goals of EFT, may be as useful or more effective as skill training in facilitating conflict resolution and relationship intimacy. Although these investigators suggest that the expression of feelings and change in interaction are important in couple's conflict resolutions, few EFT outcome studies have examined this notion (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985a), whereas others have found EFT to be less effective than other approaches in maintaining treatment gains at follow-up (Goldman & Greenberg, 1992).

The process studies, for the most part, revealed that change was associated with heightened emotional expression, an increase in affiliative behaviors, increase in self-focus, and the feeling that one's experience was validated (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1993). Although these investigators suggest that the expression of emotions and underlying feelings are important in conflict resolution, outcome measures that directly examine this relationship have not been included in the process studies to date. As well, similar to EFT outcome studies, other marital therapies (i.e., EET, IOMT) have not examined the relationship between affective self-disclosure and couples' conflict resolution, at least not in direct

investigations, in that conflict resolution is assumed through measures of marital intimacy and satisfaction.

Conclusion

Self-disclosure is a form of communication that is positively related to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, and has also been implicated in promoting effective conflict resolution between partners. The self-disclosure of affect and feelings, similar to general self-disclosure, has also been shown to be positively related to self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, and has been implicated by marital therapists as an important aspect in promoting effective relationship conflict resolution.

Summary and Evaluation of Previous Research

Despite the importance that researchers and marital therapists have attributed to the role of verbal affective self-disclosure to conflict resolution and marital quality (measured by marital satisfaction and marital adjustment), little empirical work has been carried out in this area. The marital self-disclosure literature, for instance, relates this construct to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, and to other demographic variables such as length of the marital relationship, the presence of children, and age, but not to relationship conflict resolution. The research on affective self-disclosure, as well, relates this construct to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, but not to relationship conflict resolution. The conflict resolution literature, for the most part, focuses on communication styles displayed by partners and their relation to conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, but does not directly examine how the verbal self-disclosure of affect relates to relationship conflict resolution. Moreover, as already

mentioned in the review of the literature, the findings in the conflict resolution literature are sometimes difficult to interpret and compare because different studies use different strategies and measures for assessing marital conflict resolution, relationship satisfaction, and couple communication patterns. For instance, important limitations of this research include the indirect assessment of relationship conflict resolution, in that research designs in this area, for the most part, have included marital satisfaction and marital adjustment as an outcome variable in assessing relationship conflict resolution. Furthermore, because of the multidimensional aspect of the conflict resolution construct, different studies have defined this construct in various ways and have utilized different assessment instruments for measuring it. This not only makes it difficult for researchers to discern what aspect of conflict resolution is actually being investigated, but it also becomes impossible to make comparisons among different studies. Therefore, although some consistent findings are beginning to emerge, several weaknesses exist, and many issues remain to be empirically examined.

Findings from the marital therapy outcome studies, for the most part, provide useful links between the expression of emotions and various aspects of couple functioning. For instance, studies using an EFT approach have demonstrated that expression of affect appears to be related to couple reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. The authors indicate, as well, that affective expression and disclosure is related to promoting more effective resolution of conflicts, although this relationship is not always clear or directly examined. Outcome studies using marital therapy approaches provide a rich source of data on these relationships, and often times important links between communication styles and

behaviors and some outcome of interest (i.e., relationship satisfaction, reduction of target complaints, etc). The samples that comprise these outcome studies, for the most part, are clinically distressed couples receiving some form of couples therapy, and the findings from these studies can usually only be generalized to distressed couples. Further, the exact relationship between the variables being investigated in the therapy outcome studies is sometimes difficult to discern, as other variables, which might also be changing as a result of the therapy process, and which might be difficult to identify and control for, may be influencing the relationship between the variables of interest to the researchers.

An additional limitation related to the design of the studies conducted to date involves the use of relatively few participants. This is particularly true for behavioral observation studies that examine communication and relationship satisfaction over time, and the marital therapy outcome studies. The result is diminished statistical power (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989), which can be corrected by using larger sample sizes. One strategy that has been used in an effort to increase statistical power is to combine the data collected from both husbands and wives. This strategy, however, not only violates the assumption of independence in data (Bradbury & Karney, 1993), but also assumes that processes related to communication styles, marital conflict and satisfaction is similar for men and women, which is not the case (Baucom, Notarius, Burnett, & Haefner, 1990).

In conclusion, despite the importance that clinicians have attributed to the role of affective self-disclosure in relationship conflict resolution, little adequate empirical work has been carried out to examine whether these relations exist. Empirical research is needed to examine the nature of affective self-disclosure and its relation to couple's conflict resolution

and relationship satisfaction and adjustment.

Contributions of the Present Study

The aim of the present study is to examine the relations between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution. This study was designed to: 1) examine self-reports of affective self-disclosures of individuals in marital and cohabiting relationships and how this relates to aspects of their relationship, such as relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, 2) examine how self-reports of affective self-disclosure relate to aspects of self-reports of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors. This study was designed to also identify variables that may variably relate to affective self-disclosure, such as impression management and demographic characteristics (i.e., duration of the couple relationship, number of children, age, income level), and how these variables might influence the relationship between affective self-disclosure and various aspects of conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction and adjustment. The investigation of the variables in this study serve as an important step in clarifying the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and of empirically examining the relationship between affective self-disclosure and conflict resolution.

Research Questions Addressed in the Present Study

Hypotheses

Based on the preceding review of the literature, several hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) Self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure were predicted to be positively related to self-reported levels of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. 1a) The preceding hypothesized correlations were predicted to still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for and partialled out. 1b) It was predicted that reports of affective self-disclosure would account for variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment beyond that accounted for by demographic variables (i.e., length of couple relationship, number of children present, age, and income levels).
- 2) Self-reports of affective self-disclosure were predicted to be positively related to self-reports of conflict resolution, and negatively related to ineffective relationship conflict resolution styles. 2a) The preceding hypothesized correlations were predicted to still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for. 2b) It was predicted that reports of affective self-disclosure would account for variance in conflict resolution beyond that accounted for by demographic variables.
- 3) Self-reports of affective self-disclosure were predicted to be positively related to self-reports of the frequency of resolved conflicts in the relationship. 3a) The preceding hypothesized correlations were predicted to still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for. 3b) To further examine if the predicted relationship between self-reports of affective self-disclosure and frequency of resolved conflicts was maintained,

self-reported severity of relationship conflicts were controlled for.

4) Self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment were predicted to be positively related to self-reports of conflict resolution. 4a) The preceding hypothesized correlations were predicted to be evident when impression management scores were controlled for. 4b) It was predicted that reports of conflict resolution would account for variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment beyond that accounted for by demographic variables.

5) Self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment were predicted to be positively related to self-reports of the frequency of resolved conflicts in the relationship. 5a) The preceding hypothesized correlations were predicted to be evident when impression management scores were controlled for. 5b) To further examine if the predicted relationship between self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment with frequency of resolved conflicts is maintained, self-reported severity of conflicts were partialled out of the equation.

Research Questions

The following are questions of interest, but due to the limited nature of the literature, no directional hypothesis was provided.

- 1) The first research question examined whether specific forms of self-reports of affective self-disclosures (i.e. love, happiness, sadness, anger, etc.), were related to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment.
- 2) The second research question examined whether specific forms of affective self-disclosures (i.e. love, happiness, sadness, anger, etc.) were related to self-reports of various

aspects of relationship conflict resolution.

3) Given that affective self-disclosure might relate to relationship quality and implicated in conflict resolution, an examination of variables that were related to affective self-disclosure would prove informative for both research and couples therapy. This study also examined how gender and demographic variables as, duration of relationship, number of children, age of respondent, and income levels were related to self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure.

Method

Participants

Hypotheses and research questions were analysed by correlational and hierarchical multiple regression analyses. To estimate the required sample size, the most complex statistical design was used (hierarchical multiple regression assessing affective self-disclosure by covarying the effects of gender and demographic variables). To obtain a power of .80 with a hypothesized medium effect size of .15 and an alpha of .05, it was estimated that a minimum of 59 participants would be required if analyses were performed separately for men and women. However, in most analyses, data from men and women were treated together, with gender being taken into account as a covariate in the hierarchical multiple regression analyses. In some instances, an additional test of gender and the interaction with affective self-disclosure was investigated, and according to Cohen (1988), this required an additional participant over and above the previous calculations. This is an adequate sample size in order to maintain a power level of .80 even when applying a Bonferroni correction procedure (Kirk, 1968) to adjust alpha levels due to the numerous analyses that were conducted. A power level of .80 assumes that the researcher can be confident of the directionality and significance of any relationship that would be found. Of the 238 questionnaire packages that were mailed to interested individuals, 171 were returned (98 women and 67 men), resulting in a 72% response rate.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

These 171 participants had been living with their current partner in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationship for a minimum of 6 months. Both married and common-law partners were included in the sample as there was no evidence in the empirical literature to suggest that people in marriages or in cohabiting relationships systematically differ on the variables of interest in the study. Once data outliers and questionnaires with more than 20% missing values were removed, the analyses included a sample of 162 participants (98 women, 64 men).

The mean age of these 162 participants was 33.9 years ($SD = 8.1$), with a range from 18 to 55 years. Participants had been living with their partner for an average of 8.5 years ($SD = 6.9$), with a range from 6 months to almost 34 years (only one participant was living with a partner for less than one year). Among the present sample, 67% were married and 62% had children currently living in the same household. In general, the participants were highly educated, with approximately 37% having some university or college education and 46% having attained a university undergraduate degree. Data on the employment status revealed that 59% were employed full-time and 12% were employed part-time. Among the remainder, the major categories were: 9% unemployed, 8% students, and 5% were either retired, on maternity leave, or receiving disability pension. Of the participants who reported their combined household income, 24% had a combined income under \$40,000, 47% reported a combined income between \$40,000 and \$70,000, and 28% reported a combined income greater than \$70,000. Most respondents reported their cultural background as Canadian. There were, however, other cultural groups represented in the sample, including

Italian, Spanish, Iranian, and Chinese, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the region. Based on comparisons with national population values from the 1991 Canadian census and the 1996 Canadian census, the current sample is similar in terms of presence of children (Statistics Canada, 1996c), but not similar in terms of education level (Statistics Canada, 1996a), reported family income (Statistics Canada, 1996b), and age (Statistics Canada, 1996d). Where information was available for the Ottawa-Hull region, demographic characteristics were similar for family income (Statistics Canada, 1996e), presence of children (Statistics Canada, 1996f), and age (Statistics Canada, 1996g). See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the demographic information of participants (Tables A1 to A4).

Measures

The measures for the study were self-report questionnaires designed to assess different aspects of couple's relationship, including relationship satisfaction and adjustment, affective self-disclosure, and conflict resolution styles and behaviors. For the purposes of this study, the conflict resolution construct was defined in a similar manner as it has been used in the psychological marital literature, that is, as a multidimensional construct. As well, given the multidimensional aspect of the conflict resolution construct, and the fact that there do not exist commonly accepted definitions or unidimensional measures to assess relationship conflict resolution, several measures that assess this construct were included in this study. Multiple measures were also used to examine the affective self-disclosure construct. The inclusion of multiple measures for the same construct is crucial, because often the inclusion of one measure taps into a partial aspect of any given construct (Kazdin, 1995). The self-report scales that were used for this study to examine the variables of

interest are described in the following paragraphs.

Background Information Form. This researcher-designed questionnaire was included to allow for the proper description of the sample. Participants were asked questions pertaining to age, gender, education level, employment status, length of couple relationship, marital status, number of children, and income level. The Background Information Form can be found in Appendix B.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form (DAS-SF). The DAS (Spanier, 1976) measures the quality of adjustment in marriage and other dyads. This 32-item self-report questionnaire is currently considered to be the instrument of choice for the assessment of couple relationship adjustment because of its strong psychometric properties (Carey, Spector, Lantinga, & Krauss, 1993; Crane, Allgood, Larson, Griffin, 1990; Kurdek, 1992). The validity of the total score as a measure of marital adjustment continues to be demonstrated in the marital functioning literature. The 7-item short form of the DAS (DAS-SF) was used for this study as it has been demonstrated to possess equivalent discriminant validity (Sharpley & Rogers, 1984) and concurrent validity properties of the full DAS (Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, & Vito, 1995). The internal consistency of the 7-item measure has been shown to be .79 for men and .84 for women (Hunsley et al., 1995), and in another study, has been shown to be .76 (Sharpley & Rogers, 1984). In the current study, the alpha values for the DAS-SF were .78 for the entire sample, .79 for the female participants and .75 for the male participants. The corrected-item total correlations have been shown to be greater than .49 (Hunsley et al., 1995; Sharpley & Rogers, 1984) suggesting a homogeneous set of items of overall dyadic adjustment. The DAS-SF was used in this

study to assess the individual's overall perception of the specific behaviors and activities of the couple's relationship. The 7-item Short Form of the DAS can be found in Appendix B.

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS). The KMSS (Schumm, Paff Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaihis, 1986) is a 3-item 7-point Likert-type scale which yields an index of perceived marital satisfaction. Research with this instrument has repeatedly demonstrated its strong psychometric properties in terms of possessing internal consistency ($r = .90$) and concurrent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity (Schumm, Anderson, Benigas, McCutchen, Griffin, Morris, & Race, 1985; Schumm et. al 1986). In this study, the alpha values for the total scale were .94 for the entire sample, .94 for the female participants and .93 for the male participants. The KMSS was used in this study as a measure to assess the level of perceived relationship satisfaction, that is, the individual's overall, subjective, nonbehaviorally-oriented evaluation of their couple relationship. The KMSS can be found in Appendix B.

Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale (ESDS). The ESDS (Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988) is a 40-item, 5-point Likert-type scale designed to assess the degree to which different types of emotions are expressed to one's partner (with the endpoints of "not at all willing to discuss this topic" and "always willing to discuss this topic"). Items are written to measure eight emotions: depression, happiness, jealousy, anxiety, anger, calmness, apathy, and fear. Examples of items include "Times when you felt sad," "Times when you felt angry," "Times when you felt scared". The internal consistency of the scale ranges from .86 to .97 (Hunsley, et al., 1995; Snell et al., 1988; Snell, Miller, Belk, Falconi, & Sanchez, 1989; Vera & Betz, 1992). The scale has a 12-week test-retest reliability correlation coefficient that

ranges from .58 to .75 (Snell et al., 1988). In the current study, the alpha values for the ESDS were .97 for the entire sample, with values of .97 for women and .96 for men.

Validity data include predicted relationships between willingness to self-disclose emotions and relationship satisfaction (Vera & Betz, 1992) and to the restrictive emotionality aspect of the masculine role (Snell et al., 1989). This scale was used in this study to assess the individual's willingness to self-disclose affect and feelings to their partner in their relationship. The ESDS can be found in Appendix B.

Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples (ASDSC). The ASDSC (Davidson, et al., 1983) is a 4-point, 16-item Likert-type scale designed to measure the frequency of affective self-disclosures to one's partner. The 16 affective statements are grouped within 4 broad categories of emotions; love, happiness, sadness, and anger. Examples of items include "When I do feel resentment toward my partner, I tell him/her", "When I do feel sorrow, I tell my partner". Research has shown the ASDSC to have very good internal consistency, with coefficients exceeding .90 (Davidson et al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992). In the current study, the alpha values for the ASDSC were .92 for the whole sample, .92 for the female participants, and .91 for the male participants. Validity data include predicted relationships between frequency of self-disclosures and relationship satisfaction (Davidson et al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992). The ASDSC can be found in Appendix B.

Marital Agendas Protocol (MAP). The MAP (Notarius & Vanzetti, 1983) is used to assess partners' perceived severity of marital problems currently facing the relationship. The questionnaire is divided in two parts. The first part (MAPS) requires each individual to rate the perceived intensity of 10 problem areas in their relationship with their partner:

money, communication, relatives, sex, religion, recreation, friends, drugs and alcohol, children (or potential children), and jealousy. The problems are rated on a scale of 0 to 100 with low scores indicating that the area is not at all a problem and high scores indicating that the area is a very severe problem. The second part of the questionnaire (MAPR) asks individuals to indicate whether they feel they are able to reach a mutually satisfying resolution to disagreements arising within each problem area using a scale from 0 (We can resolve 0 out of 10 disagreements that may arise in this area) to 10 (We can resolve 10 out of 10 disagreements that may arise in this area). The authors report good test-retest reliability over a two-week period ($r=.81$; Notarius & Vanzetti, 1983). Research has also found this scale to discriminate between distressed and nondistressed couples (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Meeks, Arnkoff, Glass, & Notarius, 1985), where distressed couples perceive conflict areas as being more problematic and feel less confident about their ability to resolve conflict issues than nondistressed couples. This inventory was included in this study to identify conflict areas that individuals perceive to exist in their relationship with their partner, as well as their perceived ability to resolve those relationship conflicts in a mutually satisfactory manner. The items of the MAP used in this study can be found in Appendix B.

Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (KMCS). The KMCS (Eggeman, Moxley, & Schumm, 1985) is a 27-item, 5-point Likert-type self-report questionnaire designed to measure a partner's perceptions of their stages of marital conflict. This scale is based on observational research that indicates that distressed and nondistressed couples differ in important ways across three stages of marital conflict (Gottman, 1982): the first being the "Agenda-Building" stage (KMCS-A), where the objective is to get the issues out as they are

perceived by each partner (e.g., When you and your partner are beginning to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, how often do you both begin to understand each other's feelings reasonably quickly?); the second being the "Arguing" stage (KMCS-D), where the objective is for each partner to argue for their point of view and to understand the areas of disagreement between them (e.g., After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often are you able to clearly identify the specific things for which you disagree?); and finally, the "Negotiation" stage (KMCS-N), where the objective is to come to a mutually satisfactory compromise (e.g., About the time you and your partner feel you are close to a solution to your disagreement over an important issue, how often are you able to completely resolve it with some sort of compromise that is okay with both of you?). The KMCS has good internal consistency, with alphas for all stages for men in the range of .91 to .95 and alphas for women in the range of .88 to .95 (Eggeman et al., 1985). In the current study, the alpha values for all stages range from .87 to .92 for the whole sample, .87 to .92 for female participants and .87 to .91 for the male participants. Test-retest correlations over six months are reported to range from .64 to .96 (Eggeman et al., 1985). The KMCS has been shown to have good discriminant validity and construct validity (Eggeman et al., 1985). This scale was used in this study to measure each individual's perception of the manner in which they deal with conflicts in their relationship with their partner. Given that the KMCS produces a separate score for each stage of the conflict resolution process (i.e., Agenda-Building, Arguing, and Negotiation), it was possible to obtain the individual's perception of how they dealt with their relationship conflicts for all three stages separately. The KMCS can be found in Appendix B.

The Ineffective Arguing Inventory (IAI). The IAI (Kurdek, 1994a) is an 8-item, 5-point Likert-type scale that assesses each partner's view of how the respondent and his or her partner as a couple handle and resolve conflicts (with endpoints of "Disagree Strongly" and "Agree Strongly"). The IAI is based on the view that "ineffective arguing" is a global, unidimensional couple interactional pattern. This pattern has been found to be important for relationship maintenance and stability (Heavey et al., 1993). Examples of items found on the IAI include, "Our arguments are left hanging and unresolved", and "We go for days without settling our differences". High scores on this measure reflect ineffective ways of handling conflictual discussions in a marital-type relationship. The IAI has demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with alphas ranging from .86 to .89 (Kurdek, 1994a). In the current study, the alpha values were .89 for the whole sample, .91 for the female participants and .87 for the male participants. Test-retest correlations over a 1-year period are reported to range from .63 to .84. The IAI has been shown to have good concurrent and predictive validity regarding relationship satisfaction and relationship dissolution (Kurdek, 1994a). This scale was used in this study to measure the individual's perceptions of the manner in which they resolve conflicts in their relationship with their partner. The IAI can be found in Appendix B.

Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI). The CRSI (Kurdek, 1994a) is a 16-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure each individual's perceived style of resolving conflicts in their relationship with their partner. The CRSI is based on the view that relationship maintenance and stability are related to each partner's individual method of dealing with interpersonal conflict in their relationship with their partner (Heavey et al.,

1993). The CRSI asks individuals to indicate how frequently (with endpoints of "Never" and "Always") they use each style to deal with arguments and disagreements with their partner. The 16-items fall into four categories of conflict resolution styles, including Positive Problem Solving (CRSI-PPS) (e.g., "focusing on the problem at hand"), Conflict Engagement (CRSI-CENG) (e.g., "personal attacks and losing control"), Withdrawal (CRSI-WDRL) (e.g., "refusing to discuss the issue further and tuning the other partner out"), and Compliance (CRSI-COMPL) (e.g., "giving in with little attempt to present my side of the issue"). The four problem-solving styles measured by the CRSI have been identified mainly on the basis of behavioral observations (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989) and have been related to changes in relationship satisfaction as well as to relationship dissolution (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Gottman, 1994). The CRSI has good internal consistency, with alphas for all categories ranging from .65 to .89 (Kurdek, 1994a). In the current study, the alpha values for all categories were .79 to .83 for the whole sample, .79 to .82 for the female participants and .79 to .85 for the male participants. Test-retest correlations over a 1-year period are reported to range from .46 to .83. The CRSI has been shown to have good concurrent-related and predictive criterion-related validity (Kurdek, 1994a; 1995). Given that a separate score is obtained for each style assessed with the CRSI (i.e., one score for Positive Problem Solving, Conflict engagement, Withdrawal, and Compliance subscale), it was possible to obtain the individual's perception of how they use the different problem-solving styles to deal with relationship conflicts. The CRSI can be found in Appendix B.

Impression Management (IM). The IM is one of 2 subscales of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding developed by Paulhus (1991). The 20-item, 7-point

Likert-type IM scale measures the extent to which respondents systematically overreport their performance of a wide variety of desirable behaviors and underreport undesirable behaviors. Internal consistency coefficients range from .75 to .86 with test-retest correlations over a 5 week period of .65 (Paulhus, 1991). In the current study, the alpha values were .77 for the whole sample, .78 for the female participants and .74 for the male participants. Research has demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity of the IM scale (Paulhus, 1991). This questionnaire was used in this study to assess the individual's tendency to respond in a more desirable or less desirable manner and to partial this factor out from the other variables of interest. The IM subscale can be found in Appendix B.

Procedure

Full ethics approval was obtained from the University of Ottawa Human Ethics committee prior to the start of recruitment. A copy of the approval form can be found in Appendix C.

Given the importance of obtaining variability in responses to the variables of interest, the participants for this study were recruited from various places in the Ottawa-Hull area and the surrounding regions in an effort to obtain a heterogeneous sample. Participants were recruited through announcements in the local media (i.e., newspaper advertisements), and posters and pamphlets throughout various areas in the city of Ottawa (e.g., waiting rooms of community centres and public services, apartment buildings, shopping malls, grocery stores, fitness training centres, etc.). (Refer to Appendix C for newspaper and poster advertisement).

Interested participants were able to provide their names and telephone numbers on a telephone answering machine, the number of which was listed on the advertisements, posters

and pamphlets.

Individuals who indicated an interest in participating were contacted by phone and screened for eligibility using a telephone recruitment screening protocol devised for the study. The screening protocol contained questions pertaining to the inclusion criteria for the study and general information concerning requirements of participants. Interested participants who met the following criteria were selected for inclusion into the study: the individual was cohabiting with their partner in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationship, and had lived together for at least 6 months; had no plans for separation or divorce; and was proficient in the English language (as all the measures were worded in English). (A copy of the telephone Recruitment Protocol can be found in Appendix C). Given that there were no plans for examining within-couple comparisons of self-report measures, only one partner in the couple relationship was required to complete and return the questionnaire. Eligible participants were mailed a questionnaire package to their homes to be completed by them and returned.

The package contained a cover letter that clearly informed potential participants of the purpose of the study, the procedures of the study, the requirements of the subject, as well as the issue of confidentiality. The cover letter informed individuals that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Finally, the cover letter contained specific instructions for participants on how to proceed with completing and returning the questionnaire battery, as well as where they could provide their name and address if they wished to receive a summary of the study's results and/or enter their name for a draw of \$100.00. (A copy of the Information Cover Letter for the this study can be found

in Appendix C).

The package also contained a questionnaire booklet that included a number of demographic questions and self-report measures for the participant to complete. The self-report measures were ordered in a manner where questions pertaining to least sensitive topics were placed first followed by questions tapping at more sensitive issues. As well, following the recommendations of Dillman (1977), questions asking about demographic information of the respondents were placed at the end of the booklet. To promote honest responding, during the telephone screening procedure and on the information cover letter, participants were instructed to complete their questionnaire package on their own, separately from their partner, and not to discuss their answers with their partner until the questionnaire was completed and returned. To further assure that the participant filled out the questionnaire booklet on their own, it was explained that the researchers were interested in obtaining their views and perceptions of their relationship with their partner, and that responses would only be useful to the study if they complete the questionnaire alone. The questionnaire booklet took approximately 40 to 50 minutes to complete. To assure that confidentiality was maintained, participants were informed, through the information cover letter as well as during the telephone recruitment protocol, not to write any identifying information on the questionnaire booklet to be returned. For those participants interested in obtaining a summary of the results and/or their name entered in a draw for \$100.00, they were instructed to provide their name, address, and telephone number on a separate enclosed form for them to return along with their completed questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the Form used by participants to indicate their identifying information if they wished to receive a summary of the results

and/or their name entered in the draw). Forms with identifying information that were returned along with the questionnaire envelopes were separated from the questionnaires and kept in a separate folder. The forms were used at a later date to mail out a summary of the general results upon completion of the study and/or to enter the participants name in the study's draw for \$100.00.

If the questionnaires were not returned within 3 weeks of mailing, participants were contacted by telephone and encouraged to submit their completed questionnaires if they wished to be involved in the study (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the first follow-up telephone protocol). If the questionnaires were not returned within 2 weeks of the first follow-up telephone contact, participants were recontacted by telephone one final time and asked to submit their completed questionnaires if they wished to be involved in the study (refer to Appendix C for a copy of the second follow-up telephone protocol).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Major analyses were performed using SPSS REGRESSION whereas SPSS FREQUENCIES was used in the evaluation of assumptions (SPSS, 1994; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). The first stage of the analysis involved screening the data for incomplete questionnaire responses, univariate outliers using SPSS FREQUENCIES, and multivariate outliers using SPSS REGRESSION. Sample item means were substituted for missing values. In the majority of cases, there were either no missing data or only one or two missing values. However, six participants who returned the questionnaires had more than 20% of the items missing for one or more measures. Data from those participants were not included in subsequent analyses (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Participants who were identified as having a raw score more than three standard deviations from the sample mean on at least one continuous variable remained in the final analyses, but steps were taken to minimize their influence by reducing extreme scores to three standard deviations from the mean (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). All variables except for the KMSS were within the normal range for skewness and kurtosis. It was decided not to transform this single variable to facilitate interpretation and comparison to previous research. With the use of a $p < .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis distance (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) three multivariate outliers among the cases were identified and removed. For the analyses that will be reported, the sample includes data from 162 participants, 98 women and 64 men.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), an estimate of internal consistency,

was calculated for all measures used in the study. Estimates of internal consistency are found in Table B-1 in Appendix B. All measures were within the acceptable range and are similar to those reported in the literature.

Pearson bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to examine associations among all measures used in the study. Given all the measures used to assess various aspects of dyadic relations, one would expect these measures to be moderately correlated given their conceptual similarity. Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients among all the variables for the entire sample. Correlations for all variables ranged between $-.79$ and $.80$, indicating significant correlations. The highest correlations were found to be between measures that purport to assess conceptually similar constructs, such as between scales that measure affective self-disclosure, the ASDSC and the ESDS, $r(162) = .70$, $p < .001$, and between scales that assess various aspects of conflict resolution, IAI and KMCS-A, KMCS-D, KMCS-N. Correlations among the variables that comprise the hypotheses of interest ranged between $-.69$ to $.69$, indicating a moderate correlation, but not excessive to be considered redundant with each other.

Prior to conducting analyses to test the hypotheses of interest, separate correlations for men and women were conducted in order to examine any gender differences in the correlations of interest. Looking at the Pearson correlations for men (Table 1a) and women (Table 1b), there were some differences in correlations found between the variables of interest. Because of these differences, it was decided that the simplest way to control for any gender influences on the variables of interest was to include gender and its interaction with the other predictor variables in the main hierarchical multiple regression (HMR)

Table 1

Correlation Matrix for Variables for Entire Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. ASDSC															
2. ESDS	.70***														
3. DAS	.41***	.43***													
4. KMSS	.37***	.38***	.69***												
5. IAI	-.39***	-.42***	-.69***	-.66***											
6. KMCS-A	.35***	.39***	.66***	.60***	-.79***										
7. KMCS-D	.26***	.39***	.65***	.63***	-.73***	.80***									
8. KMCS-N	.30***	.37***	.66***	.60***	-.78***	.77***	.72***								
9. CRSICENG	-.11	-.20**	-.47***	-.43***	.56***	-.49***	-.50***	-.48***							
10. CRSIPPS	.26***	.29***	.61***	.52***	-.66***	.58***	.54***	.64***	-.62***						
11. CRSIWDRL	-.31***	-.35***	-.51***	-.46***	.62***	.49***	-.51***	-.53***	.48***	-.56**					
12. CRSICOMPL	-.22**	-.30***	-.26***	-.20**	.33***	-.38***	-.38***	-.37***	.15*	-.18*	.37***				
13. MAPR	.27***	.34***	.38***	.33***	-.47***	.41***	.39***	.43***	-.28***	.45***	-.35***	-.24**			
14. MAPS	-.30***	-.36***	-.65***	-.61***	.57***	-.61***	-.59***	-.56***	.43***	-.39***	.43**	.23**	-.25***		
15. IM	.10	.16*	.21**	.19*	-.17*	.16*	.26***	.18*	-.30***	.33***	-.30***	-.02	.06	-.23**	
<u>M</u>	47.12	141.62	20.90	17.39	18.77	38.60	55.85	42.16	9.01	15.04	9.24	8.78	7.76	19.52	8.19
<u>SD</u>	8.54	28.01	4.27	3.05	7.06	7.90	11.01	7.38	2.93	2.42	3.02	2.84	1.78	13.59	4.04

Notes.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples. ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRSICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale. CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale. CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity. IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 1a

Correlation Matrix for Variables (Male sample; n=64)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. ASDSC															
2. ESDS															
3. DAS	.35**														
4. KMSS	.14	.24													
5. IAI	-.20	-.40***													
6. KMCS-A	.17	.32**	.73***												
7. KMCS-D	.01	.25*	.65***	.56***											
8. KMCS-N	.12	.33**	.68***	.51***	-.77***										
9. CRSICENG	-.08	-.29*	-.50***	-.44***	.56***	-.58***									
10. CRSIPPS	.25*	.29*	.68***	.48***	-.64***	.57***	.66***								
11. CRSIWDRL	-.07	-.20	-.53***	-.36**	.60***	-.49***	-.44***	-.55***							
12. CRSICOMPL	-.08	-.12	-.17	-.02	.25*	-.27*	-.32***	-.25*	.15	-.12					
13. MAPR	.20	.24*	.60***	.35***	-.54***	.49***	.48***	.58***	-.44***	.60***	-.36**				
14. MAPS	-.19	-.42***	-.67***	-.68***	.66***	-.61***	-.59***	-.59***	.55***	-.40***	.49***	.13			
15. IM	.03	.10	.36**	.31**	-.32**	.28*	.45***	.29*	-.34**	.40***	-.22	-.04	.30**		
M	43.53	131.72	20.74	17.67	19.02	38.73	55.09	42.56	8.80	15.17	9.53	9.21	7.96	19.56	7.45
SD	7.56	26.26	4.21	2.71	6.17	7.69	10.25	7.05	2.86	2.30	2.81	2.85	1.47	13.12	3.79

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples, ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory, KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage, KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage, KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage, CRSICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale, CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale, CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale, CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale, MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity, IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 1b

Correlation Matrix for Variables(Female sample; n=98)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. ASDSC															
2. ESDS	.70***														
3. DAS	.47***	.46***													
4. KMSS	.55***	.51***	.67***												
5. IAI	-.50***	-.45***	-.68***	-.70***											
6. KMCS-A	.50***	.46***	.63***	.61***	-.80***										
7. KMCS-D	.38***	.47***	.65***	.68***	-.77***										
8. KMCS-N	.45***	.45***	.66***	.65***	-.79***	.79***									
9. CRSICENG	-.17	-.19	-.46***	-.41***	.57***	-.45***	-.44***	-.50***							
10. CRSIPPS	.31**	.33***	.57***	.54***	-.67***	.60***	.53***	.64***	-.63***						
11. CRSIWDRL	-.43***	-.42***	-.49***	-.51***	.63***	.50***	-.55***	.46***	.54**						
12. CRSICOMPL	-.36**	-.39***	-.32***	-.31**	.37***	-.45***	-.41***	.17	-.23*	.40***					
13. MAPR	.36***	.45***	.28**	.31**	-.46***	.38***	.36***	.37***	-.20*	.38***	-.37***	-.31**			
14. MAPS	-.38***	-.35***	-.65***	-.57***	.52***	-.61***	-.50***	-.55***	.37***	-.39***	.40**	.29**	-.18		
15. IM	.06	.13	.12	.14	-.10	.10	.15	.13	-.31**	.30**	-.33***	-.02	.03	-.23*	
<u>M</u>	49.46	148.14	21.01	17.20	18.60	38.51	56.44	41.93	9.18	14.98	9.04	8.50	7.63	19.48	8.66
<u>SD</u>	8.39	27.19	4.32	3.26	7.61	8.08	11.46	7.61	3.02	2.50	3.15	2.79	1.96	13.94	4.12

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples, ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory, KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage, KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Aguing stage, KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage, CRSICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale, CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale, CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale, CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale, MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity, IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

analyses. Gender accounted for a small but significant amount of variance for some analyses by interacting with affective-self disclosure while examining relationship quality. For that reason, gender remained in the equation for the HMR as a separate control variable. Table 2 shows correlations among all the variables for the entire sample once impression management scores were controlled for. The correlations among all the variables once impression management scores were controlled for the male sample are shown in Table 2a, and for the female sample in Table 2b. For the most part, the strength and significance of the correlations were still maintained once impression management scores were taken into account.

To examine differences between respondents who were married and living common-law, two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were performed: one for the demographic variables (i.e., age, length of cohabiting period, number of children, personal and household income) and one for all the variables of interest for the study. To control for spurious effects a Bonferroni correction (Kirk, 1968; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) was applied. The adjusted alpha level was .025 for each main effect. Using Wilk's λ as a criterion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989), it was found that the overall MANOVA comparing the means for the demographic variables as a function of marital status was significant ($F(5, 156) = 12.66, p < .001$). Because the overall MANOVA for marital status was significant, the univariate analyses for each demographic variable was calculated. After a further Bonferroni correction for the 5 demographic variables was applied, resulting in an adjusted alpha of .005, household income ($F(1, 160) = 15.83, p < .001$), and duration of cohabiting period ($F(1, 160) = 36.77, p < .001$) were the only significant variables. It

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 2
Correlation Matrix for Variables for Entire Sample (Controlling for Impression Management Scores)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. ASDSC														
2. ESDS	.70***													
3. DAS	.40***	.41***												
4. KMSS	.35***	.36***	.68***											
5. IAI	-.37***	-.40***	-.68***	-.65***										
6. KMCS-A	.34***	.37***	.65***	.58***	-.79***									
7. KMCS-D	.24***	.37***	.63***	.62***	-.72***	.79***								
8. KMCS-N	.29***	.36***	.65***	.59***	-.78***	.76***	.72***							
9. CRSICENG	-.08	-.16**	-.43***	-.39***	.54***	-.47***	-.46***	-.45***						
10. CRSIPPS	.25***	.26***	.58***	.49***	-.66***	.56***	.50***	.63***	-.58***					
11. CRSIWDRL	-.30***	-.32***	-.47***	-.43***	.60***	.47***	-.47***	-.51***	.43***	-.52**				
12. CRSICOMPL	-.22**	-.31***	-.27***	-.20**	.33***	-.38***	-.39***	-.37***	.15*	-.19*	.38***			
13. MAPR	.26***	.33***	.37***	.32***	-.47***	.41***	.38***	.43***	-.28***	.45***	-.35***	-.24**		
14. MAPS	-.28***	-.34***	-.64***	-.59***	.55***	-.60***	-.56***	-.54***	.43***	-.34***	.39**	.23**	-.24***	

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples, ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory, KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage, KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage, KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage, CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale, CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale, CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale, CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale, MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 2a

Correlation Matrix for Variables -Controlling for Impression Management Scores (Male sample; n=64)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. ASDSC														
2. ESDS	.61***													
3. DAS	.36**	.40***												
4. KMSS	.13	.22	.69***											
5. IAI	-.20	-.39**	-.69***	-.55***										
6. KMCS-A	.17	.30*	.70***	.51***	-.77***									
7. KMCS-D	-.01	.23	.59***	.50***	-.62***	.77***								
8. KMCS-N	.19	.31**	.65***	.46***	-.75***	.71***	.60***							
9. CRSICENG	-.07	-.27*	-.43***	-.38***	.50***	-.54***	-.58***	-.38**						
10. CRSIPPS	.26*	.27*	.63***	.40***	-.59***	.52***	.49***	.62***	-.53***					
11. CRSIWDRL	-.07	-.19	-.49***	-.31***	.57***	-.46***	-.39***	-.52***	.50***	-.59**				
12. CRSICOMPL	-.08	-.11	-.17	-.01	.26*	-.28*	-.34***	-.25*	.14	-.11	.31**			
13. MAPR	.20	.22	.55***	.29*	-.47***	.44***	.40***	.54***	-.38**	.34**	-.32**	-.13		
14. MAPS	-.19	-.41***	-.64***	-.66***	.63***	-.58***	-.56***	-.56***	-.36**	-.54***	.46**	.12	-.36**	

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples. ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale. KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale. CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale. CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 2b

Correlation Matrix for Variables-Controlling for Impression Management Scores (Female Sample; n=98)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. ASDSC														
2. ESDS	.70***													
3. DAS	.47***	.46***												
4. KMSS	.55***	.51***	.67***											
5. IAI	-.06	-.13	-.12	-.14										
6. KMCS-A	.49***	.45***	.62***	.61***	-.80***									
7. KMCS-D	.38***	.46***	.64***	.67***	-.76***	.80***								
8. KMCS-N	.45***	.44***	.65***	.65***	-.79***	.78***	.76***							
9. CRSICENG	-.16	-.16	-.45***	-.39***	.57***		-.42***	-.49***						
10. CRSIPPS	.31**	.31**	.56***	.52***	-.69***	.58***	.52***	.63***	-.59***					
11. CRSIWDRL	-.43***	-.40***	-.48***	-.50***	.63***	-.50***	-.53***	-.52***	.40***	-.49***				
12. CRSICOMPL	-.36**	-.39***	-.33***	-.32**	.38***	-.46***	-.42***	-.46***	.18	-.25**	.43***			
13. MAPR	.36***	.46***	.29**	.32***	-.46***	.38***	.37***	.37***	-.21	.40***	-.40***	-.31**		
14. MAPS	-.38***	-.33***	-.64***	-.55***	.52***	-.60***	-.58***	-.54***	.33***	-.35***	.36**	.30**	-.20	

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples. ESDS=Emotional Self Disclosure Scale. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale. KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale. CRSIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale. CRSIWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. MAPR=Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution MAPS=Marital Agendas Protocol-Severity.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

appears that for this sample, individuals who reported living in common-law relationships have been living together for a shorter duration and report a lower household income compared to individuals who reported being married. Given these group differences, it was considered important to control for the demographic variables in some of the analyses, so they were included as control variables in all the HMR procedures. Again, using Wilk's λ as a criterion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989), it was found that the overall MANOVA comparing the means for the variables of interest as a function of marital status was not significant ($F(15, 146) = 1.65, p > .025$). Because the overall MANOVA comparing the means for the variables of interest as a function of marital status was not significant, it was not necessary to investigate the impact of each main effect at the univariate level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989), and it was not necessary to control for marital status in the HMR analyses.

Given that some demographic background variables were used as control variables in the HMR analyses, correlations were calculated between the demographic variables and the scales of interest. Table 3 shows the correlations for all the demographic variables and Table 4 shows the correlations between demographic variables and the variables of interest in the study.

Testing of Hypotheses

All the HMR tables which summarize the statistical analyses conducted to test each hypothesis show the R , the adjusted R^2 , changes in R^2 , and significance for changes in R^2 for each step in the analysis. The first column for each HMR table shows the standardized and unstandardized beta weights for the final equation, and the last row shows the R^2 , the

Table 3.

Correlation Matrix for Demographic Variables (Entire Sample N=162)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. AGE	-				
2. PINCOME	.14	-			
3. CINCOME	.24**	.55***	-		
4. DURATION	.73***	.06	.24**	-	
5. CHILDNUM	.32***	-.06	-.01	.31***	-
6. GENDER	-.11	-.38***	-.04	-.04	.02

Note.

AGE= Age of respondent. PINCOME= Personal Income level of respondent.

CINCOME=Combined Household Income. DURATION=Duration of Couple Relationship.

CHILDNUM=Number of Children. GENDER=Gender of Respondent.

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 4.
Correlations for all Scales with Demographic Variables (Full Sample N=162)

	ASDSC	ESDS	KMSS	DAS	IAI	KMCSA	KMCSD	KMCSN	CRSICENG	CRSIPPS	CRSIWDR L	CRSICOM PL	MAPR	MAPS
AGE	-.26**	-.19**	-.17*	-.13	.02	-.02	-.08	-.01	-.01	.05	.11	.05	-.08	.09
PINCOME	-.17*	-.13	.13	.10	-.20**	.15	.14	.22**	-.29***	.21**	.04	-.05	.17*	-.17*
CINCOME	.08	.13	.14	.15*	-.20**	.21**	.24**	.24**	-.24**	.22**	-.21**	-.11	.24**	-.25***
DURATION	-.27***	-.18*	-.12	-.15	.04	-.12	.05	.08	.08	-.02	.02	.10	-.11	.08
CHILDNUM	-.18*	-.09	-.12	-.05	.08	-.14	-.14	-.10	.09	.00	.18*	.01	-.13	.17*
GENDER	.34***	.29***	-.07	.03	-.03	-.01	.06	-.04	.07	-.04	-.12	-.08	-.08	.00

Note.

ASDS=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples ESDS=Self Disclosure of Emotions Scale. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale. CRIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale. CRIWDR=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. CRICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. MAPR-Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution Subscale. MAPS-Marital Agendas Protocol-Problem Severity Subscale. AGE= Age of respondent. PINCOME= Personal Income level of respondent. CINCOME=Combined Household Income. DURATION=Duration of Couple Relationship. CHILDNUM=Number of Children. GENDER=Gender of Respondent.

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

intercept, the F and the corresponding degrees of freedom for the final equation. The order of entry of the variables was determined prior to the analysis. Gender was entered on the first step and demographic variables such as age, duration of relationship, number of children, and personal and household income were entered on the second step as control variables. The variable of interest to this study, affective self-disclosure, was entered on the third step once gender and demographic variables were controlled for. The interaction between gender and scores on affective self-disclosure measures was entered on the last step of the regression equation. All HMR tables are structured in the same manner.

Given that the affective self-disclosure scale (ASDSC) and self-disclosure of emotions scale (ESDS) purport to measure conceptually a similar construct, in this study, both measures were treated as the same variable, namely, the self-disclosure of affect. Any differences in the findings that might arise using either measure were reported accordingly. Given that the ASDSC and the ESDS were considered as the same variable, it was determined that it was not necessary to control for Type I error rate for both variables. However, for analyses that were performed to examine the relationship between the ASDSC or the ESDS and other variables of interest for this study, an attempt to reduce the Type I error rate was made by utilizing a Bonferroni correction procedure (Kirk, 1968; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Given the total number of tests that were performed, it was considered too extreme to use a Bonferroni correction for all the tests. Rather, the analyses were grouped according to hypotheses and the Bonferroni correction procedure was applied to the analyses within a given hypothesis (Kirk, 1968).

Hypothesis 1: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of affective self-disclosure (ASDSC and ESDS) would be positively related to relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS). Separate Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between affective self-disclosure scores on the ESDS and ASDSC and relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS). In the first set of hypotheses, where the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment was examined, given that two measures are being investigated, the probability level for achieving significance has been adjusted to an alpha of .025.

As shown in Table 1, both measures used to assess affective self-disclosure (ASDSC and the ESDS) correlated significantly with relationship satisfaction and adjustment measures. Correlational analysis demonstrated that self-reports of affective self-disclosure (ASDSC) was correlated with both relationship satisfaction, $r(162) = .37$, $p < .001$, and relationship adjustment, $r(162) = .41$, $p < .001$. Willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS) was positively related to both relationship satisfaction, $r(162) = .38$, $p < .001$, and relationship adjustment, $r(162) = .43$, $p < .001$.

It was hypothesized that the positive correlation between self-disclosure scores and relationship adjustment and satisfaction would still be evident once impression management (IM) scores were controlled for. As shown in Table 2, controlling for impression management scores did not significantly reduce the correlation between affective self-disclosure scores and relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment.

It was hypothesized that reports of affective self-disclosure would account for

significant variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS) beyond that accounted for by gender and/or demographic variables (i.e., length of couple relationship, number of children present, age, and income). Four HMR analyses were performed. Two analyses involved determining the amount of variance accounted for by the ASDSC on either the DAS or the KMSS beyond that afforded by gender and demographic variables. Similarly, two HMR analyses were performed using the ESDS rather than the ASDSC. For each HMR, gender was entered as a predictor variable on the first step, demographic variables were entered as a block on the second step, followed by the addition of affective-self disclosure measures (ESDS and ASDSC separately) on the third step. The interaction between gender and affective self-disclosure was entered on the last step.

As reported in the HMR results presented in Tables 5 to 8, consistent findings were obtained with the two measures used to assess affective self-disclosure (ASDSC and the ESDS) in accounting for the variance in relationship adjustment and relationship satisfaction. Table 5 shows the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction accounted for by self-reports of affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased R^2 when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender was entered at the last step and produced a small but significant increase in R^2 . This finding suggests that the relationship between self-reports of affective self-disclosure using the ASDSC and relationship satisfaction was moderated by the gender of respondent.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship

Table 5
Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-7.76	-1.24	.07	.00	.01
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.06
Age	-.05	-.14			
Number of Children	-.01	-.00			
Length of Relationship	.03	.08			
Personal Income	.11	.10			
Household Income	.04	.03			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.05	.16	.45	.17	.14***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.14	1.19	.49	.20	.03**
Intercept	15.50				
F(8,153)=6.05***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.24		

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; KMSS = Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

** p < .01

Figure 1. Affective Self-Disclosure on Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Gender.



satisfaction as a function of gender of respondent. To understand this relationship, Aiken and West (1991) suggested that one way of teasing out the interaction for continuous variables is by taking “snap shots” at various points along one of the predictor variables. This yields regression lines similar to the presentation of a discrete variable. Following the suggestion of Aiken and West (1991), two values (one standard deviation above the mean and one standard deviation below the mean) were chosen to plot the relationship. However, these are arbitrary values and represent only two of an infinite number of values that could have been chosen. As shown in Figure 1, for women, it appears that the higher their self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure, the higher their self-reported levels of relationship satisfaction. For men, on the other hand, higher levels of affective self-disclosure were not related to higher levels of self-reported relationship satisfaction. This result is mirrored in the simple Pearson correlations for each gender. As shown in Table 1a, for men, ASDSC was not related to KMSS, $r = .14$, $p > .025$. As shown in Table 1b, however, for women, ASDSC was positively related to KMSS, $r = .55$, $p < .001$.

Table 6 shows the amount of variance in relationship adjustment (DAS) accounted for by reports of affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased R^2 when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase R^2 .

Table 7 shows the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction accounted for by self-reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased R^2 when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and

Table 6
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-1.64	-.18	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.02	-.04			
Number of Children	.22	.06			
Length of Relationship	-.02	-.04			
Personal Income	.18	.11			
Household Income	.13	.07			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.20	.41	.46	.17	.15***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.02	.12	.46	.17	.00
Intercept					
F(8,153)=5.15***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.21		

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale - Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 7
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1. Gender	-5.87	-.94	.07	-.00	.00
Step 2. Demographics			.27	.04	.07
Age	-.06	-.16			
Number of Children	-.09	-.03			
Length of Relationship	.03	.07			
Personal Income	.14	.12			
Household Income	.02	.01			
Step 3. ESDS	.02	.21	.46	.18	.14***
Step 4. ESDS X GENDER	.03	.88	.49	.20	.02
Intercept	15.43				
F(8,153)=5.89***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.23		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; KMSS = Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** $p < .001$

demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender was entered at the last step, but was not considered to significantly increase R^2 using the Bonferroni corrected alpha level.

Table 8 shows the amount of variance in relationship adjustment (DAS) accounted for by reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased R^2 when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase R^2 .

In summary, affective self-disclosure scores were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment scores and these correlations were maintained once the individual's impression management scores were controlled for. Affective self-disclosure scores still accounted for unique variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment scores once the gender of respondent and demographic variables were controlled for. This pattern of findings was evident when the ASDSC or the ESDS was used. When the interaction between gender of respondent and affective self-disclosure was considered, it accounted for additional unique variance in relationship satisfaction over and above that accounted for by gender alone, demographic variables, or affective-self-disclosure scores alone, at least when the ASDSC measure was used.

Table 8
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-1.34	-.15	.03	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.02	-.04			
Number of Children	.11	.03			
Length of Relationship	-.04	-.06			
Personal Income	.18	.11			
Household Income	.09	.05			
Step 3.					
ESDS	.06	.41	.47	.19	.16***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.00	.11	.47	.18	.00
Intercept	11.30				
F(8,153)=5.52***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.22		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale - Short Form.

*** p < .001

Hypothesis 2.: Affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of affective self-disclosure would be positively related to self-reports of conflict resolution behaviors and styles described by the literature as effective, and negatively related to relationship conflict resolution styles described by the literature as ineffective. Separate Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relation between self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure (ESDS and ASDSC) and self-reports of relationship conflict-resolution styles and behaviors (KMCS-A, KMCS-D, KMCS-N; CRSI-CENG, CRSI-PPS, CRSI-WDRL, CRSI-COMPL; and IAI). In this second set of hypotheses, where the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution was examined, given that eight subscales of conflict resolution are being investigated, the probability level for achieving significance was adjusted to an alpha of .006.

As shown in Table 1, both measures used to assess affective self-disclosure (ASDSC and the ESDS) correlated significantly with all measures of relationship conflict resolution, with the exception of conflict-engaging styles of resolving relationship conflicts. Correlational analysis demonstrate that self-reports of affective self-disclosure (ASDSC) was positively related to different stages of relationship conflict resolution, Agenda Building stage (KMCS-A), $r = .35$, $p < .001$, Arguing stage (KMCS-D), $r = .26$, $p < .001$, Negotiation stage (KMCS-N), $r = .30$, $p < .001$, and to Positive Problem Solving (CRSIPPS) styles of relationship conflict resolution, $r = .26$, $p < .001$. ASDSC was negatively related to Ineffective Arguing behaviors (IAI), $r = -.39$, $p < .001$, Compliance

styles (CRSICOMPL), $r = -.22$, $p < .001$, and Withdrawal styles (CRSIWDRL), $r = -.31$, $p < .001$, of relationship conflict resolution. ADSC was not related to Conflict Engaging (CRSICENG) styles of relationship conflict resolution, $r = -.11$, ns. Consistent results were demonstrated when the ESDS was correlated with the various conflict resolution measures. As shown in Table 1, willingness to self-disclose emotions (ESDS) was positively related to different phases of relationship conflict resolution, the Agenda Building stage (KMCS-A), $r = .39$, $p < .001$, Arguing stage (KMCS-D), $r = .39$, $p < .001$, and Negotiation stage (KMCS-N), $r = .37$, $p < .001$, and to Positive Problem Solving (CRSIPPS), $r = .29$, $p < .001$, styles of relationship conflict resolution. ESDS was negatively related to Ineffective Arguing behaviors (IAI), $r = -.42$, $p < .001$, Compliance styles (CRSICOMPL), $r = -.30$, $p < .001$, and Withdrawal styles (CRSIWDRL), $r = -.35$, $p < .001$, of relationship conflict resolution. The relationship between ESDS and Conflict Engaging styles of conflict resolution was nonsignificant.

It was hypothesized that these correlations would still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for and partialled out of the equation. As shown in Table 2, controlling for impression management scores did not significantly change the correlations between affective self-disclosure scores and relationship conflict resolution behaviors and styles.

It was hypothesized that affective self-disclosure would account for variance in conflict resolution styles and behaviors beyond that accounted for by gender and demographic variables. Sixteen HMR analyses were performed. Eight analyses involved determining the amount of variance accounted for by the ASDSC on the various measures

used to assess relationship conflict resolution; that is, on either the IAI, the four CRSI subscales (i.e., CRSI-CENG, CRSI-PPS, CRSI-WDRL, CRSI-COMPL), or the three KMCS subscales (i.e., KMCS-A, KMCS-D, KMCS-N), beyond that afforded by gender and demographic variables. Similarly, eight analyses were performed using the ESDS rather than the ASDSC. For each HMR, gender was entered as a predictor variable on the first step, demographic variables were entered as a block on the second step, followed by the addition of affective-self disclosure measures (ESDS and ASDSC separately) on the third step. The interaction between gender and affective self-disclosure was entered on the last step.

Tables 9, 10, and 11 show the amount of variance in different phases of relationship conflict resolution (KMCS-A, KMCS-D, KMCS-N, separately) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased R^2 in the Agenda Building phase (KMCS-A) (Table 9), Arguing phase (KMCS-D) (Table 10), and Negotiation Phase (KMCS-N) (Table 11) of relationship conflict resolution when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender of respondent, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase R^2 for the Agenda-Building phase (Table 9), the Arguing phase (Table 10), nor for the Negotiation phase (Table 11) of relationship conflict resolution, suggesting that the relationship between affective self-disclosure and the communication styles and behaviors during the various stages of conflict resolution appear to be similar for men and women.

Table 9
Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Agenda Building phase (KMCS-A)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-14.17	-.88	.01	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.08
Age	.16	.16			
Number of Children	-.40	-.06			
Length of Relationship	-.16	-.14			
Personal Income	.27	.09			
Household Income	.34	.10			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.17	.18	.44	.16	.11***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.27	.88	.46	.17	.02
Intercept	22.65				
F(8,153)=5.23***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.21		

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; KMCS-A = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Agenda Building phase.

*** p < .001

Table 10
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Arguing phase (KMCS-D)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-19.16	-.85	.05	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.09
Age	-.06	-.04			
Number of Children	-.75	-.08			
Length of Relationship	.05	.03			
Personal Income	.31	.07			
Household Income	.74	.16			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.03	.02	.36	.09	.04**
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.42	.97	.39	.10	.02
Intercept	47.84				

F(8,153)=3.46***

Total R²=.15

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; KMCS-D = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Arguing phase.

*** p < .001

** p < .006

Table 11
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Negotiation phase (KMCS-N)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-12.75	-.84	.04	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.09
Age	.09	.10			
Number of Children	-.16	-.02			
Length of Relationship	-.09	-.08			
Personal Income	.44	.16			
Household Income	.32	.10			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.13	.16	.42	.14	.09***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.25	.85	.44	.15	.01
Intercept	28.25				
F(8,153)=4.71***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.19		

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; KMCS-N = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Negotiation phase.

***p < .001

** p < .006

Tables 12, 13, and 14 show the amount of variance in relationship conflict resolution (KMCS-A, KMCS-D, KMCS-N) accounted for by self-reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ in the Agenda Building phase (Table 12), Arguing phase (Table 13), and Negotiation Phase (Table 14) of relationship conflict resolution when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ for conflict resolution styles and behaviors during the Agenda Building stage, Discussion stage, or Negotiation stage.

Table 15 shows the amount of variance in Ineffective Arguing (IAI) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 16 shows the amount of variance in Ineffective Arguing (IAI) styles accounted for by self-reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 17 shows the amount of variance in Conflict Engagement Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-CENG) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once

Table 12
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Agenda Building phase (KMCS-A)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-6.63	-.41	.01	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.08
Age	.14	.15			
Number of Children	-.57	-.09			
Length of Relationship	-.17	-.15			
Personal Income	.33	.11			
Household Income	.28	.08			
Step 3.					
ESDS	.08	.31	.46	.18	.13***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.03	.38	.46	.18	.00
Intercept	19.44				
F(8,153)=5.51***			Total <u>R</u> ² =.21		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; KMCS-A = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Agenda Building phase.

*** p < .001

Table 13
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Arguing phase(KMCS-D)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-12.52	-.55	.05	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.09
Age	-.07	-.05			
Number of Children	-.88	-.10			
Length of Relationship	.09	.05			
Personal Income	.52	.12			
Household Income	.48	.10			
Step 3.					
ESDS	.09	.24	.45	.17	.12***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.09	.62	.47	.18	.01
Intercept	37.61				

F(8,153)=5.48***

Total R²=.22

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; KMCS-D = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - resolution - Arguing phase.

*** p < .001

Table 14
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Conflict Resolution - Negotiation phase (KMCS - N)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR^2</u>
Step 1.					
Gender	-5.63	-.37	.04	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.29	.05	.08
Age	.08	.09			
Number of Children	-.29	-.05			
Length of Relationship	-.09	-.08			
Personal Income	.51	.18			
Household Income	.23	.07			
Step 3.					
ESDS	.08	.33	.47	.19	.14***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.03	.33	.47	.19	.00
Intercept	23.56				
F(8,153)= 5.70***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .22		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; KMCS-N = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Negotiation phase.

*** $p < .001$

Table 15
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Ineffective Arguing (IAI)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	11.61	.80	.02	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.03	.06
Age	-.03	-.04			
Number of Children	.01	.00			
Length of Relationship	-.04	-.04			
Personal Income	-.63	-.24			
Household Income	.00	.00			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	-.22	-.26	.47	.19	.16***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	-.24	-.87	.49	.20	.02
Intercept	34.63				

$F(8,153)=6.15***$

Total R²=.24

Note. ASDSC=Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples; IAI = Ineffective Arguing Inventory.

*** p < .001

Table 16
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and
Demographic Variables on Ineffective Arguing (IAI)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	4.43	.30	.02	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.03	.07
Age	-.02	-.03			
Number of Children	.20	.03			
Length of Relationship	-.02	-.02			
Personal Income	-.67	.01			
Household Income	.05				
Step 3.					
ESDS	-.09	-.38	.49	.20	.17***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	-.03	-.34	.49	.20	.00
Intercept	36.87				

F(8,153)= 6.29***

Total R²= .24

Note. ESDS= Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale; IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory.

*** p < .001

Table 17
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Conflict Engagement (CRSI-CENG)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	.39	.06	.06	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.34	.08	.11**
Age	-.03	-.10			
Number of Children	.07	.03			
Length of Relationship	.06	.15			
Personal Income	-.26	-.24			
Household Income	-.13	-.10			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	-.03	-.10	.35	.08	.01
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	-.00	-.06	.35	.08	.00
Intercept	14.01				

F(8,153)= 2.81**

Total R²= .12

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples. CRSI-CENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement.

** p < .006

the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. Demographic variables, when entered on the second step of the equation significantly accounted for an increase in $\underline{R}^2$. The interaction between ASDSC and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 18 shows the amount of variance in Conflict Engagement Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-CENG) accounted for by reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 19 shows the amount of variance in Positive Problem Solving Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-PPS) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 20 shows the amount of variance in Positive Problem Solving Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-PPS) accounted for by reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$.

Table 18
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and
Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Conflict Engagement (CRSI-CENG)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-1.4	-.23	.06	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.34	.08	.11**
Age	-.04	-.11			
Number of Children	.09	.03			
Length of Relationship	.06	.15			
Personal Income	-.28	-.26			
Household Income	-.09	-.07			
Step 3.					
ESDS	-.02	-.28	.39	.11	.04
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.01	.28	.39	.11	.00
Intercept	16.27				
F(8, 153)= 3.63***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .15		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale. CRSI-CENG= Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Conflict Engagement.

*** p < .001

** p < .006

Table 19

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Positive Problem Solving (CRSI-PPS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.59	-.12	.03	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.06
Age	.03	.12			
Number of Children	.10	.05			
Length of Relationship	-.02	-.07			
Personal Income	.16	.09			
Household Income	.07	.09			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.09	.32	.39	.11	.09***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	.00	.06	.39	.11	.00
Intercept	8.12				

F(8, 153)= 3.51***

Total R²= .15

Note. ASDSC=Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples. CRSI-PPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving.

*** p < .001

Table 20
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and
Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Positive Problem Solving (CRSI-PPS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.82	-.16	.03	-.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	.03	.12			
Number of Children	.05	.02			
Length of Relationship	-.03	-.09			
Personal Income	.16	.18			
Household Income	.06	.06			
Step 3.					
ESDS	.02	.30	.40	.12	.09***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	.00	.13	.40	.11	.00
Intercept	8.86				
F(8, 153)= 3.68***				Total <u>R</u> ² = .16	

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale. CRSI-PPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving.

*** p < .001

Table 21 shows the amount of variance in Withdrawal Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-WDRL) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ASDSC and gender was entered at the last step, but was not considered to significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ using the Bonferroni corrected alpha level.

Table 22 shows the amount of variance in Withdrawal Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-WDRL) accounted for by self-reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS). ESDS significantly increased $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered on the last step, did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$, suggesting that the relationship between affective self-disclosure and withdrawal styles of conflict resolution appears to be similar for men and women when the ESDS measure is used.

Tables 23 shows the amount of variance in Compliance Styles of relationship conflict resolution (CRSI-COMPL) accounted for by affective self-disclosure (ASDSC). ASDSC did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. Demographic variables, entered at step 2, accounted for significant increases in $\underline{R}^2$. The interaction between ASDSC and gender was entered at the last step, but did not significantly increase $\underline{R}^2$ using the Bonferroni corrected alpha level.

Table 21

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Withdrawal (CRSI-WDRL)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	5.78	.93	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.15	-.01	.02
Age	.00	-.11			
Number of Children	-.11	-.04			
Length of Relationship	-.03	-.07			
Personal Income	-.09	-.08			
Household Income	-.01	-.01			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	-.04	-.11	.33	.07	.09***
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	-.12	-1.04	.37	.09	.02
Intercept	12.25				

$F(8, 153) = 3.11^{**}$

Total $\underline{R}^2 = .13$

Note. ASDSC=Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples. CRSI-WDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal.

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .006$

Table 22
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and
Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Withdrawal (CRSI-WDRL)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	3.64	.59	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.15	-.01	.02
Age	.01	.03			
Number of Children	-.05	-.02			
Length of Relationship	-.03	-.07			
Personal Income	-.11	-.10			
Household Income	-.01	.00			
Step 3.					
ESDS	-.02	-.21	.36	.09	.11***
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	-.02	-.67	.38	.10	.01
Intercept	13.09				
F(8, 153)= 3.31***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .14		

Note. ESDS = Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale. CRSI-WDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal.

*** p < .001

Table 23
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC) and Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Compliance (CRSI-Compl)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	5.63	.97	.12	.00	.02
Step 2.					
Demographics			.33	.07	.09**
Age	.05	.14			
Number of Children	.32	.14			
Length of Relationship	-.05	-.14			
Personal Income	.04	.04			
Household Income	-.24	-.20			
Step 3.					
ASDSC	.03	.09	.35	.08	.01
Step 4.					
ASDSC X GENDER	-.13	-1.15	.39	.11	.03
Intercept	7.86				
F(8,153)= 3.63***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .15		

Note. ASDSC = Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples. CRSI-Compl = Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Compliance.

*** p < .001

** p < .006

Tables 24 shows the amount of variance in Compliance Styles of conflict resolution (CRSI-COMPL) accounted for by reports of willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS).

Demographic variables, entered at step 2, accounted for significant increases in R^2 . ESDS significantly increased R^2 when entered on the third step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed. The interaction between ESDS and gender, entered at the last step, did not significantly increase R^2 .

In summary, self-reports of affective self-disclosure were negatively related to the measure used to assess ineffective arguing styles. As well, individuals who reported engaging in greater amounts of affective self-disclosure also reported engaging in effective styles and constructive behaviors of resolving relationship conflicts at various stages of the conflict discussion and resolution process (i.e., the Agenda-Building stage, the Arguing stage, and the Negotiation stage). As well, certain styles of dealing with disagreements that the marital conflict resolution literature describes as effective or constructive (i.e., positive problem-solving), were positively related to self-reports of affective self-disclosure, whereas styles of dealing with problem areas described as ineffective or destructive (i.e., withdrawing, compliant), were negatively related to affective self-disclosure. These correlations were maintained once the gender of respondent, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for.

Hypothesis 3: Affective self-disclosure and frequency of relationship conflict resolution.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of affective self-disclosure would be positively related to self-reports of the frequency of resolved conflicts in the relationship (MAPR).

Separate Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationship

Table 24
 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS) and
 Demographic Variables on Conflict Resolution Styles - Compliance (CRSI-Compl)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	3.22	.55	.12	.00	.01
Step 2.					
Demographics			.33	.07	.10**
Age	.05	.16			
Number of Children	.34	.15			
Length of Relationship	-.06	-.16			
Personal Income	-.00	-.00			
Household Income	-.20	-.17			
Step 3.					
ESDS	-.00	-.09	.40	.12	.05**
Step 4.					
ESDS X GENDER	-.02	-.67	.42	.13	.01
Intercept	10.37				
F(8, 153)= 4.10***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .17		

Note. ESDS=Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale. CRSI-Compl=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Compliance.

*** p < .001

** p < .006

between self-reports of affective self-disclosure (ESDS and ASDSC) and frequency of resolved relationship conflicts reported (MAPR). In this third set of hypotheses, where the relationship between affective self-disclosure and frequency of relationship conflict resolution was examined, given that only one measure was being investigated, it was not necessary to use a Bonferroni correction to adjust the probability level for achieving significance, and an alpha of .05 was used.

As shown in Table 1, both measures used to assess affective self-disclosure (ASDSC and the ESDS) correlated significantly with reported frequency of relationship conflicts. Correlational analysis demonstrated that affective self-disclosure (ASDSC) was positively related with self-reports of frequency of resolved relationship conflicts (MAPR), $r = .27$, $p < .001$. Willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS) was also positively related to self-reports of frequency of resolved relationship conflicts (MAPR), $r = .34$, $p < .001$.

It was hypothesized that the preceding correlations would still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for. As shown in Table 2, controlling for impression management scores did not significantly reduce the correlation between affective self-disclosure scores (ASDSC or the ESDS) and self-reports of frequency of resolved conflicts (MAPR).

It was also hypothesized that the predicted relationship between self-reports of affective self-disclosure and frequency of resolved relationship conflicts would be maintained once self-reported severity of relationship conflicts (MAPS) was also taken into account and partialled out of the equation. Controlling for self-reported severity of relationship conflicts did not significantly reduce the correlation between affective self-

disclosure scores (ASDSC) and self-reports of frequency of resolved conflicts, $r = .21$, $p < .01$, nor did MAPS scores change the correlation between willingness to self-disclose affect (ESDS) and self-reports of frequency of resolved conflicts, $r = .28$, $p < .001$.

In summary, affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to the reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts. These correlations were maintained once the variance from the individual's impression management scores and reported severity of relationship problems was controlled for. In other words, the more individuals reported engaging in greater amounts of affective self-disclosure, the more they reported being able to resolve relationship conflicts more frequently.

Hypothesis 4: Relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment and relationship conflict resolution.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment would be positively related to self-reports of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors described by the literature as effective, and negatively related to self-reports of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors described by the literature as ineffective. Separate Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the association between relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS) and reports of relationship conflict-resolution styles and behaviors (KMCS, CRSI, and IAI). In this set of hypotheses, where the association between relationship quality (satisfaction or relationship adjustment) and relationship conflict resolution was examined, given that two scales for relationship quality and eight subscales for conflict resolution were being investigated, the probability level for achieving significance has been adjusted to an alpha

of .003 to correct for Type I error associated with conducting 16 different analyses.

As shown in Table 1, correlational analyses demonstrated that self-reports of relationship satisfaction (KMSS) was positively related to different phases of relationship conflict resolution; Agenda Building stage (KMCS-A), $r = .60, p < .001$, Arguing stage (KMCS-D), $r = .63, p < .001$, the Negotiation stage (KMCS-N), $r = .60, p < .001$, and to Positive Problem Solving (CRSIPPS) styles of relationship conflict resolution, $r = .52, p < .001$. KMSS scores were negatively related to Ineffective Arguing behaviors (IAI), $r = -.66, p < .001$, to Conflict Engaging styles (CRSICENG), $r = -.43, p < .001$, Compliance styles (CRSICOMPL), $r = -.20, p < .001$, and Withdrawal styles (CRSIWDRL), $r = -.43, p < .001$, of relationship conflict resolution.

As shown in Table 1, self-reports of relationship adjustment (DAS) were positively related to different phases of relationship conflict resolution; the Agenda Building stage (KMCS-A), $r = .66, p < .001$, Arguing stage (KMCS-D), $r = .65, p < .001$, the Negotiation stage (KMCS-N), $r = .66, p < .001$, and to Positive Problem Solving styles (CRSIPPS) of relationship conflict resolution, $r = .61, p < .001$. DAS scores were negatively related to Ineffective Arguing (IAI), $r = -.69, p < .001$, and to Conflict Engaging styles (CRSICENG), $r = -.47, p < .001$, Compliance styles (CRSICOMPL), $r = -.26, p < .001$, and Withdrawal styles (CRSIWDRL), $r = -.51, p < .001$, of relationship conflict resolution.

It was hypothesized that these correlations would be maintained when impression management scores were controlled for. As shown in Table 2, controlling for impression management scores did not significantly change the correlation between relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS) and self-reports of relationship

conflict resolution styles and behaviors.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of relationship conflict resolution would account for variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment beyond that accounted for by gender or demographic variables. Sixteen hierarchical regression analyses were performed. Eight analyses involved determining the amount of variance accounted for by the KMSS on the various measures used to assess relationship conflict resolution: that is, on either the IAI, the four CRSI subscales, or the three KMCS subscales, beyond that afforded by gender and demographic variables. Similarly, eight analyses were performed using the DAS rather than the KMSS. For each HMR, gender was entered as a predictor variable on the first step, demographic variables were entered as a block on the second step, followed by the addition of relationship conflict resolution measures (IAI, CRSI subscales, and KMCS subscales separately) on the third step. For all sixteen analyses, the interaction between gender and relationship conflict resolution (either the IAI, CRSI, or the KMCS) was not entered on the last step, as Pearson correlations demonstrated that the relationship between the various relationship conflict resolution measures and the KMSS or DAS are similar for men and women (see Tables 1a and 1b).

Table 25 shows the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) accounted for by Ineffective Arguing styles (IAI). IAI significantly increased R^2 when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed from the equation.

Table 25

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Ineffective Arguing Styles (IAI) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.84	-.13	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.07	-.19			
Number of Children	-.03	-.01			
Length of Relationship	.01	.03			
Personal Income	-.08	-.07			
Household Income	.09	.07			
Step 3.					
IAI	-.28	-.66	.69	.45	.41***
Intercept	25.32				
F(7, 154)= 20.52***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .48		

Note. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 26 shows the amount of variance in relationship adjustment (DAS) accounted for by Ineffective Arguing styles (IAI). IAI significantly increased R^2 when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 27 and 28 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment, respectively, accounted for by the Agenda-Building phase (KMCS-A) of relationship conflict resolution. KMCS-A significantly increased R^2 in relationship satisfaction (Table 27), and relationship adjustment (Table 28) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 29 and 30 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment accounted for by the Arguing phase of relationship conflict resolution (KMCS-D). KMCS-D significantly increased R^2 in KMSS (Table 29) and DAS (Table 30) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 31 and 32 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS) accounted for by the Negotiation phase of relationship conflict resolution (KMCS-N). KMCS-N significantly increased R^2 in KMSS (Table 31) and DAS (Table 32) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Table 26

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Ineffective Arguing Styles (IAI) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.25	-.02	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.03	-.07			
Number of Children	.18	.05			
Length of Relationship	-.06	-.10			
Personal Income	.13	-.08			
Household Income	.18	.10			
Step 3.					
IAI	-.41	-.68	.70	.47	.43***
Intercept	29.58				
F(7, 154)= 21.98***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .49		

Note. IAI = Ineffective Arguing Inventory. DAS-Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 27

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution -Agenda Building Phase (KMCS-A) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	.50	.43	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.27	.03	.07
Age	-.10	-.27			
Number of Children	.03	.01			
Length of Relationship	.05	.12			
Personal Income	.01	.01			
Household Income	.04	.03			
Step 3.					
KMCS-A	.22	.59	.62	.36	.32***
Intercept	11.29				
F(7, 154)= 14.42***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .39		

Note. KMCS-A = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Agenda Building Phase. KMSS = Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 28

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution-Agenda Building Phase (KMCS-A) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	.23	.57	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.08	-.16			
Number of Children	.30	.08			
Length of Relationship	.00	.00			
Personal Income	.01	.00			
Household Income	.08	.05			
Step 3.					
KMCS-A	.35	.66	.68	.44	.40***
Intercept	8.50				
F(7, 154)= 19.15***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .46		

Note. KMCS-A = Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building. DAS= Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 29
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution -Arguing phase (KMCS-D)
and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR^2</u>
Step 1.					
Gender	-.76	-.12	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.05	-.14			
Number of Children	.05	.02			
Length of Relationship	3.20	7.25			
Personal Income	.00	.00			
Household Income	.01	.01			
Step 3.					
KMCS-D	.17	.62	.65	.40	.36***
Intercept	9.73				
F(7, 154)= 16.67***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .43		

Note. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale - Arguing phase. KMSS= Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 30

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution Arguing phase (KMCS-D) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.13	-.01	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.01	-.02			
Number of Children	.31	.09			
Length of Relationship	-.08	-.13			
Personal Income	-2.48	-1.57			
Household Income	.07	.04			
Step 3.					
KMCS-D	.24	.64	.66	.41	.37***
Intercept	7.17				
F(7, 154)= 17.18***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .43		

Note. KMCS-D = Kanas Marital Conflict Scale. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 31

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution -Negotiation Phase (KMCS-N) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.48	-.07	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.09	-.24			
Number of Children	-.02	.00			
Length of Relationship	-.02	.08			
Personal Income	-.03	-.02			
Household Income	.04	.03			
Step 3.					
KMCS-N	.25	.60	.63	.37	.33***
Intercept	9.66				
F(7, 154)= 15.03***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .40		

Note. KMCS-D= Kansas Marital Conflict Scale -Negotiation Phase. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 32

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Conflict Resolution -Negotiation Phase (KMCS-N) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender			.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.06	-.12			
Number of Children	.21	.06			
Length of Relationship	-.02	-.03			
Personal Income	-.06	-.04			
Household Income	.09	.05			
Step 3.					
KMCS-N	.38	.66	.68	.43	.40***
Intercept	6.18				

F(7, 154)= 19.05***

Total R²= .46

Note. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Tables 33 and 34 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS), respectively, accounted for by Conflict-Engaging styles (CRSICENG) of relationship conflict resolution. CRSICENG significantly increased R^2 in KMSS (Table 33) and in DAS (Table 34) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 35 and 36 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS), respectively, accounted for by Positive-Problem Solving styles (CRSIPPS) of conflict resolution. CRSIPPS significantly increased R^2 in KMSS (Table 35) and in DAS (Table 36) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 37 and 38 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS), respectively, accounted for by Withdrawal styles (CRSIWDRL) of conflict resolution. CRSIWDRL significantly increased R^2 in KMSS (Table 37) and in DAS (Table 38) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Tables 39 and 40 show the amount of variance in relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS), respectively, accounted for by Compliance styles (CRSICOMPL) of conflict resolution. CRSICOMPL did not significantly increase R^2 in KMSS (Table 39) nor in DAS (Table 40) when entered on the last step of the regression equation once the variance from gender and demographic variables was removed.

Table 33

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles Conflict Engagement (CRSI-CENG) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.53	-.08	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.09	-.24			
Number of Children	-.05	-.02			
Length of Relationship	.03	.07			
Personal Income	-.06	-.05			
Household Income	.13	.10			
Step 3.					
CRSI-CENG	-.43	-.41	.47	.19	.15***
Intercept	23.79				

F(7, 154)= 6.45***

Total R²= .22

Note. CRSI-CENG= Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory -Conflict Engagement. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 34

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles -Conflict Engagement (CRSI-CENG) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	.18	.02	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.07
Age	-.06	-.12			
Number of Children	.15	.04			
Length of Relationship	-.03	-.05			
Personal Income	-.11	-.07			
Household Income	.23	.13			
Step 3.					
CRSI-CENG	-.66	-.45	.50	.21	.18***
Intercept	27.87				

F(7, 154)= 7.35***

Total R²= .25

Note. CRSI-CENG= Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory -Conflict Engagement. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 35

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Positive Problem Solving (CRSI-PPS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.52	.45	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.06
Age	-.09	-.25			
Number of Children	-.13	-.05			
Length of Relationship	.03	.07			
Personal Income	-.03	-.03			
Household Income	.09	.07			
Step 3.					
CRSI-PPS	.65	.52	.57	.29	.26***
Intercept	10.35				
F(7, 154)= 10.61***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .32		

Note. CRSI-PPS= Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 36

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Positive Problem Solving (CRSI-PPS) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	.19	.02	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.07	-.14			
Number of Children	.03	.01			
Length of Relationship	-.03	-.05			
Personal Income	-.07	-.04			
Household Income	.16	.09			
Step 3.					
CRSI-PPS	1.06	.60	.63	.37	.34***
Intercept	6.50				
F(7, 154)= 14.93***				Total <u>R</u> ² = .40	

Note. CRSI-PPS - Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Positive Problem Solving. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 37
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Withdrawal (CRSI-WDRL) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR^2</u>
Step 1.					
Gender	-.70	-.11	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.06	-.17			
Number of Children	-.12	-.05			
Length of Relationship	.00	.00			
Personal Income	.02	.02			
Household Income	.14	.11			
Step 3.					
CRSI-WDRL	-.44	-.44	.51	.23	.19***
Intercept	22.97				
F(7, 154)= 7.90***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .26		

Note. CRSI-WDRL = Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Withdrawal. KMSS = Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

*** p < .001

Table 38
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Withdrawal (CRSI-WDRL) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.07	.00	.03	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.25	.02	.06
Age	-.02	-.04			
Number of Children	.05	.01			
Length of Relationship	-.08	-.14			
Personal Income	.02	.01			
Household Income	.24	.13			
Step 3.					
CRSI-WDRL	-.68	-.48	.54	.26	.23***
Intercept	26.58				

F(7, 154)= 9.15***

Total R²= .29

Note. CRSI-WDRL = Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Withdrawal. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale--Short Form.

*** p < .001

Table 39
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Compliance (CRSI-Compl) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Satisfaction (KMSS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.56	-.09	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.06	-.17			
Number of Children	-.04	-.01			
Length of Relationship	-.01	-.02			
Personal Income	.04	.04			
Household Income	.15	.12			
Step 3.					
CRSI-COMPL	-.16	-.15	.30	.05	.02
Intercept	19.97				

F(7, 154)= 2.27

Total R²= .09

Note. CRSI-COMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

Table 40

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Conflict Resolution Styles-Compliance (CRSI-Compl) and Demographic Variables on Relationship Adjustment (DAS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1.					
Gender	-.56	-.09	.07	.00	.00
Step 2.					
Demographics			.26	.03	.07
Age	-.06	-.17			
Number of Children	-.04	-.01			
Length of Relationship	-.01	-.02			
Personal Income	.04	.04			
Household Income	.15	.12			
Step 3.					
CRSI-COMPL	-.16	-.15	.30	.05	.02
Intercept	19.97				

F(7, 154)= 2.27

Total R²= .09

Note. CRSI-COMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance. DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form.

In summary, self-reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment were significantly related to various aspects of relationship conflict resolution. Self-reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment were negatively related to the measure used to assess ineffective arguing styles. As well, individuals who reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction or relationship adjustment also reported engaging in effective styles and constructive behaviors of resolving relationship conflicts at various stages of discussing a problem area (i.e., the Agenda-Building, Arguing, and Negotiation stages). The results also indicate that there were certain styles of dealing with disagreements (i.e., problem-focused styles) that related positively to reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment, whereas other styles of dealing with problem areas (i.e., conflict engaging and withdrawing styles) were negatively related to reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. These correlations were maintained once the variance from gender, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for.

Hypothesis 5: Relationship satisfaction and adjustment and frequency of resolved conflicts.

It was hypothesized that self-reports of relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment would be positively related to self-reports of the frequency of resolved conflicts in the relationship (MAPR). Separate Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relation between frequency of resolved conflicts (MAPR) and relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS). In this set of hypotheses, where the relationship between relationship satisfaction or relationship adjustment and frequency of relationship conflict resolution was examined, given that two measures were being used to investigate relationship quality (KMSS and the DAS), it was necessary to use a

Bonferroni correction to adjust the probability level for achieving significance, and an alpha of .025 was used. As shown in Table 1, correlational analyses demonstrate that reports of frequency of resolved relationship conflicts (MAPR) are positively related to self-reports of relationship satisfaction (KMSS), $r = .33$, $p < .001$, and positively related to self-reports of relationship adjustment (DAS), $r = .38$, $p < .001$.

It was hypothesized that the correlations would still be evident when impression management scores were controlled for and partialled out of the equation. As shown in Table 2, controlling for impression management scores did not significantly reduce the correlation between self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts and relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS).

It was hypothesized that the correlations would still be evident when self-reports of the severity of relationship conflicts (MAPS) were controlled for and partialled out of the equation. Controlling for self-reports of severity of relationship conflicts (MAPS) did not significantly reduce the correlation between self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts and relationship satisfaction (KMSS), $r = .23$, $p < .001$, nor with relationship adjustment (DAS), $r = .29$, $p < .001$.

In summary, self-reports of the frequency of resolved relationship conflicts were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and these correlations were maintained once the variance from the reported severity of relationship problems and the individual's impression management scores was controlled for. In other words, the more individuals reported satisfaction and adjustment in their relationship, the higher their self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts.

Testing of Research Questions

Research Question 1.

The first research question examined whether specific forms of self-reports of affective self-disclosures (i.e. love, happiness, sadness, anger, fear, etc.) were related to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. This set of research questions are different from the specific hypotheses outlined earlier, in that they are exploratory in nature. A correlational approach was used to determine the relationship between specific forms of affect being self-disclosed (ASDSC and ESDS) and relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS). Using the ASDSC, separate correlation coefficients were calculated for the four subscales measuring the self-disclosure of different affects (i.e., anger, sadness, love, and happiness) with relationship satisfaction (KMSS) and relationship adjustment (DAS). Separate correlation coefficients were also calculated for the 8 subscales of the ESDS (i.e., happiness, anxiety, depression, anger, jealousy, calmness, apathy, and fear) with relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. Given that these research questions were exploratory, utilizing a strict Bonferroni procedure to control for Type I error, as was applied to the specific hypotheses, might limit the ability to observe any trends among these variables or to further explore any relationship that might be potentially interesting. The corrected alpha level was calculated by summing the eight subscales of the ESDS and the four subscales of the ASDSC, resulting in a total of 12 tests. Given this rationale, a Bonferroni corrected alpha level of .004 was used to adjust for the possibility of Type I error.

Table 41 shows the correlation matrix for all subscales of the ASDSC (ie., ASDSLove, ASDSHapp, ASDSSad, ASDSAng) and ESDS (ie., ESDSDep, ESDSHap, ESDSJear, ESDSAnx, ESDSAng, ESDSCalm, ESDSApath, ESDSFear) and relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. Correlations for all variables ranged between .04 to .81. As one would expect, the highest correlations were found between the various subscales that comprise the two measures used to assess affective self-disclosure, the ESDS and the ASDSC. Correlations among the variables that comprise the hypotheses of interest ranged between .04 to .50, indicating a low to moderate correlation, but not too excessive to be considered redundant with each other.

As shown in Table 41, relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment were positively correlated with all subscales of the ASDSC with the exception of the Anger subscale. Similar correlations were found using the ESDS; relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment correlated significantly with all subscales of the ESDS with the exception of the Anger subscale. The strength and significance in correlations between all subscales of the ASDSC or the ESDS with KMSS and DAS were maintained when impression management scores were partialled out.

Tables 41a and 41b show the correlation matrix for all subscales of the ASDSC and ESDS and relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment for the male and female sample, respectively. As shown in Table 41a, the strength and significance in correlations between subscales of the ASDSC or the ESDS with the KMSS or DAS were not as consistently evident for the men, with the exception of the positive correlation between the DAS and positive emotions as love, happiness, as well as apathy. As shown in Table 41b,

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 41.

Correlation Matrix for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment scales.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. KMSS	-														
2. DAS	.69***	-													
3. ASDSLOVE	.43***	.50***	-												
4. ASDSHAPP	.34***	.46***	.78***	-											
5. ASDSSAD	.36***	.39***	.57***	.60***	-										
6. ASDSANG	.08	.04	.38***	.36***	.56***	-									
7. ESDSDEP	.37***	.38***	.46***	.50***	.65***	.41***	-								
8. ESDSHAP	.36***	.45***	.56***	.67***	.39***	.23***	.57***	-							
9. ESDSJAL	.29***	.28***	.44***	.46***	.47***	.46***	.63***	.46***	-						
10. ESDSANX	.34***	.35***	.46***	.49***	.53***	.43***	.81***	.56***	.69***	-					
11. ESDSANG	.20	.16	.35***	.31***	.45***	.71***	.61***	.34***	.61***	.67***	-				
12. ESDSCALM	.27***	.40***	.49***	.49***	.26***	.11	.45***	.66***	.44***	.51***	.25***	-			
13. ESDRAPAT	.35***	.41***	.44***	.44***	.47***	.31***	.70***	.51***	.64***	.72***	.52***	.61***	-		
14. ESDSFEAR	.27***	.35***	.40***	.49***	.57***	.39***	.76***	.51***	.58***	.75***	.50***	.38***	.60***	-	
15. IM	.19	.21	.11	.18	.10	-.05	.18	.11	.12	.10	.02	.11	.14	.20**	-

Note.

ASDSLave=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale, ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale, ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale, ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale, ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale, ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale, ESDSJal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale, ESDSAnx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale, ESDSAng=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale, ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale, ESDSApath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale, ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .006$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 41a.

Correlation Matrix for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment scales (Male Sample: n=64)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. KMSS	-														
2. DAS	.72***	-													
3. ASDSLOVE	.29**	.46***	-												
4. ASDSHAPP	.22	.41***	.74***	-											
5. ASDSSAD	.15	.29	.44***	.59***	-										
6. ASDSANG	-.20	-.02	.37***	.40***	.45***	-									
7. ESDSDEP	.20	.32	.27	.42***	.53***	.22	-								
8. ESDSHAP	.26	.39***	.55***	.67***	.27	.22	.39***	-							
9. ESDSJEAL	.24	.29	.37***	.36	.39***	.40***	.63***	.36	-						
10. ESDSANX	.21	.30	.44***	.50***	.46***	.35	.83***	.46***	.68***	-					
11. ESDSANG	-.01	.11	.19	.17	.30	.66***	.51***	.27	.56***	.57***	-				
12. ESDSCALM	.19	.31	.53***	.57***	.24	.26	.49***	.71***	.44***	.58***	.33	-			
13. ESDRAPAT	.27	.45***	.38***	.39***	.42***	.24	.64***	.39***	.66***	.65***	.45***	.60***	-		
14. ESDSFEAR	.13	.35	.22	.36	.38***	.20	.72***	.43***	.48***	.73***	.42***	.45***	.62***	-	
15. IM	.31	.36	.01	.16	.01	-.06	.13	.05	-.04	.06	.05	.11	.11	.16	

Note.

ASDSLave=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale, ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale, ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale, ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale, ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale, ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale, ESDSJeal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale, ESDSAnx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale, ESDSAng=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale, ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale, ESDSApath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale, ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .006$

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 4lb.

Correlation Matrix for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment scales (Female Sample n=98)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. KMSS	-														
2. DAS	.67***	-													
3. ASDSLOVE	.53***	.52***	-												
4. ASDSHAPP	.44***	.50***	.78***	-											
5. ASDSSAD	.53***	.47***	.62***	.56***	-										
6. ASDSANG	.27	.06	.35***	.25**	.55***	-									
7. ESDSDEP	.50***	.43***	.54***	.47***	.67***	.42***	-								
8. ESDSHAP	.45***	.50***	.54***	.66***	.42***	.15	.65***	-							
9. ESDSJEAL	.36***	.27**	.43***	.46***	.45***	.42***	.60***	.48***	-						
10. ESDSANX	.46***	.39***	.43***	.43***	.52***	.38***	.78***	.61***	.67***	-					
11. ESDSANG	.33***	.18	.41***	.34***	.51***	.73***	.65***	.36***	.61***	.71***	-				
12. ESDSCALM	.32***	.46***	.47***	.45***	.26	.01	.42***	.62***	.43***	.48***	.20	-			
13. ESDRAPAT	.41***	.38***	.46***	.44***	.48***	.31***	.73***	.57***	.62***	.75***	.54***	.61***	-		
14. ESDSFEAR	.47***	.40***	.46***	.40***	.58***	.32***	.77***	.53***	.58***	.74***	.52***	.36***	.62***	-	
15. IM	.14	.12	.13	.15	.09	-.13	.16*	.10	.16	.07	-.04	.10	.13	.15	-

Note.

ASDSLave=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale, ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale, ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale, ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale, ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale, ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale, ESDSJeal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale, ESDSAnx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale, ESDSANG=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale, ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale, ESDSAPath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale, ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale, DAS=Dyadic Adjustment Scale, KMSS-Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses - Impression Management.

*** p < .001 ** p < .006

the strength and significance in correlations between all subscales of the ASDSC or the ESDS with the KMSS or the DAS were more evident for the women. These findings, as well, were maintained once IM scores were controlled for. However, for the subsample of women, the self-disclosure of anger (as measured using the ASDSC) correlated positively with relationship satisfaction once their IM scores were controlled for.

In summary, with the exception of self-disclosure of anger, reported self-disclosure levels of specific affects were found to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction and to relationship adjustment. It appears that the more individuals reported self-disclosing a range of feelings, including love, happiness, sadness, anxiety, depression, jealousy, and fear, the higher their self-reported levels of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. These findings were maintained even once impression management scores were controlled for. This pattern of correlations was primarily evident for the entire sample and for the subsample of women, not for the subsample of men.

Research Question 2.

The second research question examined whether specific forms of affective self-disclosure were related to various aspects of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors. This set of research questions was also different from the specific hypotheses outlined earlier, in that they were exploratory in nature. A correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between the four subscales of ASDSC measuring disclosure of different affects (i.e., anger, sadness, love, and happiness) and self-reports of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors (KMCS, IAI, CRSI separately). Separate correlation coefficients were also calculated for the 8 subscales of the ESDS (i.e.,

happiness, anxiety, depression, anger, jealousy, calmness, apathy, and fear) and the measures used to assess various aspects of relationship conflict resolution (KMCS, IAI, CRSI separately). Given that these research questions were exploratory in nature than the preceding specific hypothesis, utilizing a strict Bonferroni procedure to control for Type I error, as was applied to the specific hypotheses, might limit the ability to observe any trends among these variables or to further explore any relationship that might be potentially interesting. A corrected alpha level was calculated by summing the eight subscales of the ESDS measure and the four subscales of the ASDSC, resulting in a total of 12 tests. A Bonferroni corrected alpha level of .004 was used to adjust for the possibility of Type I error.

Instead of presenting the results in the form of a correlation matrix, as was done for the first research question, the relevant findings are presented in a correlation table. Table 42 shows the correlation coefficients for all subscales of the ASDSC (ie. ASDSLove, ASDSHapp, ASDSSad,) and ESDS (ie., ESDSDep, ESDSHap, ESDSJear, ESDSAnx, ESDSAng, ESDSCalm, ESDSApath, ESDSFear) with all conflict resolution measures (IAI, CRSI, and KMCS) used. As shown in Table 42, significant correlations were found between the IAI, and all three stages of conflict resolution of the KMCS (Agenda building (KMCS-A) Discussion (KMCS-D), and Negotiation (KMCS-N) phase) with all subscales of the ASDSC or ESDS except for the Anger subscales. With the exception of the subscales used to measure anger, the results suggest that the more one reports self-disclosing affects assessed by either the ASDCS or the ESDS, the more one reports engaging in effective behaviors to resolve relationship conflicts, and the less one reports

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 42.

Correlations for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution measures

	IAI	KMCS-A	KMCS-D	KMCS-N	CRSICENG	CRSIPPS	CRSIWDL	CRSICOMPL	MAPR
ASDSLOVE	-.39***	.35***	.26***	.33***	-.28***	.39***	-.35***	-.18*	.32***
ASDSHAPP	-.40***	.36***	.29***	.53***	-.26***	.34***	-.30***	-.16*	.32***
ASDSSAD	-.41***	-.42***	.34***	.34***	-.14	.27***	-.33***	-.20**	.32***
ASDSANG	-.08	.06	-.03	-.01	.26***	-.09	-.06	-.19	.03
ESDSDEP	-.41***	.40***	.40***	.37***	-.22***	.29***	.35***	-.28***	.33***
ESDSHAP	-.33***	.27***	.28***	.30***	-.21**	.34***	-.24**	-.16*	.26***
ESDSJEAL	-.27***	.26***	.25**	.25***	-.14	.14	-.20**	-.28***	.27***
ESDSANX	-.38***	.35***	.34***	.33***	-.15*	.22	-.34***	-.26***	.33***
ESDSANG	-.20**	.21**	.16*	.19*	.12	.08	-.20**	-.33***	.15*
ESDSCALM	-.31***	.28***	.32***	.26***	-.29***	.30***	-.24	-.17*	.33***
ESDSAPAT	-.36***	.34***	.36***	.36***	-.18*	.27***	-.31***	-.21**	.34***
ESDSFEAR	-.40***	.34***	.38***	.32***	-.22**	.24**	-.33***	-.23**	.30***

Note.

ASDSL=Love=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale, ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale, ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale, ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale, ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale, ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale, ESDSJeal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale, ESDSAnx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale, ESDSAng=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale, ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale, ESDSpath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale, ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale, IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory, KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage, KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage, KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage, CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale, CRIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale, CRIWDL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale, CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale, MAPR-Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution Subscale,

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

engaging in ineffective styles and behaviors to resolve relationship conflicts.

The subscales of the CRSI that measure various relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors were correlated with some of the affects being assessed by the ASDSC subscales and ESDS subscales, but the strength of the correlations were weaker than the correlations with the IAI or the KMCS subscales. As shown in Table 42, the conflict resolution styles that assess positive problem solving behaviors correlated positively with the self-disclosure of affects described as happiness, sadness, love, depression, calmness, and apathy. Conflict resolution styles described as withdrawing correlated negatively with the self-disclosure of most affects, including the self-disclosure of happiness, sadness, love, depression, anxiety, apathy, and fear. Conflict resolution styles described as “Conflict Engaging” also correlated negatively with the self-disclosure of affects such as happiness, love, depression, and calmness, and correlated positively with the self-disclosure of anger, at least as assessed using the ASDSC, and not the ESDS. Conflict resolution styles described as “Compliant” correlated negatively with the least amounts of affects self-disclosed, including only the self-disclosure of depression, jealousy, anxiety, and anger. The significance and direction of the correlations between subscales of ASDSC and ESDS with conflict resolution measures were maintained when impression management scores were partialled out.

Tables 42a and 42b show the correlation coefficients for all subscales of the ASDSC and ESDS with all conflict resolution measures (IAI, CRSI, and KMCS) for the male and female sample, respectively. As shown in Table 42a, the significance and direction of the correlations between subscales of ASDSC and ESDS with conflict

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 42a.
Correlations for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution measures (Male Sample n=64)

	IAI	KMCS-A	KMCS-D	KMCS-N	CRSICENG	CRSIPPS	CRSIWDL	CRSICOMPL	MAPR
ASDSLOVE	-.25**	.19	.01	.16	-.20*	.34**	-.14	.13	.19
ASDSHAPP	-.30**	.26*	.16	.19	-.23*	.31**	-.14	.11	.20
ASDSSAD	-.17	.25*	.16	.14	-.15	.21*	-.10	-.01	.25*
ASDSANG	-.06	-.16	-.29**	-.09	.32**	-.04	-.14	-.02	.00
ESDSDEP	-.36**	.38***	.31**	.30**	-.31**	.27*	-.19	-.15	.22*
ESDSHAP	-.29**	.21*	.14	.22*	-.25**	.26*	-.16	-.07	.05
ESDSJEAL	-.32**	.23*	.16	.22*	-.14	.12	.00	-.07	.26*
ESDSANX	-.35**	.31**	.23*	.26*	-.28**	.22*	-.18	-.09	.20
ESDSANG	-.15	.02**	-.07	.16	.10	.10	-.04	-.20	.14
ESDSCALM	-.25*	.20	.17	.22*	-.32**	.22*	-.12	-.01	.05
ESDSAPAT	-.42***	.28**	.29**	.40***	-.35**	.38***	-.28**	-.05	.35**
ESDSFEAR	-.35**	.33**	.35**	.26*	-.26**	.24*	-.29**	-.08	.22*

Note.

ASDSLve=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale, ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale, ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale, ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale, ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale, ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale, ESDSJeal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale, ESDSANx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale, ESDSAng=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale, ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale, ESDSPath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale, ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale, IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory, KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage, KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage, KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage, CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale, CRIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale, CRIWDL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale, CRSICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale, MAPR-Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution Subscale.

*** p < .001 ** p < .06 * p < .06

Affective Self-Disclosure and Conflict Resolution

Table 42b.
Correlations for subscales of affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution measures (Female Sample n=98).

	IAI	KMCS-A	KMCS-D	KMCS-N	CRSICENG	CRSIPPS	CRSIWDRL	CRSICOMPL	MAPR
ASDSLOVE	-.47***	.46***	.39***	.45***	-.34***	.43***	-.35***	-.34***	.35***
ASDSHAPP	-.46***	.41***	.35***	.45***	-.31***	.39***	-.38***	-.28**	.38***
ASDSSAD	-.55***	.55***	.44***	.51***	-.18*	.35***	-.44***	-.27**	.32***
ASDSANG	-.13	.18*	.06	.06	.23**	-.11	-.12	-.27**	.11
ESDSDEP	-.45***	.43***	.45***	.46***	-.21*	.34***	-.42***	-.33***	.44***
ESDSHAP	-.36***	.32***	.35***	.37***	-.21*	.41***	-.28**	-.18*	.39***
ESDSJEAL	-.25**	.31***	.28**	.31***	-.18*	.18*	-.30***	-.38***	.33***
ESDSANX	-.40***	.41***	.41***	.40***	-.12	.26**	-.42***	-.33***	.44***
ESDSANG	-.23**	.33***	.27**	.23**	.12	.07	-.27**	-.39***	.29**
ESDSCALM	-.34***	.33***	.41***	.30***	-.28**	.35***	-.31**	-.25**	.28**
ESDSAPAT	-.33***	.38***	.40***	.35***	-.10	.22*	-.32***	-.30***	.33***
ESDSFEAR	-.49***	.42***	.43***	.45***	-.29**	.32**	-.36***	-.28**	.39***

Note.

ASDSL=Love=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Love Subscale. ASDSHapp=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Happiness Subscale.
ASDSSad=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Sadness Subscale. ASDSAng=Affective Self Disclosure Scale for Couples-Anger Subscale.
ESDSDep=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Depression Subscale. ESDSHap=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Happiness Subscale. ESDSJeal=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Jealousy Subscale. ESDSAnx=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anxiety Subscale. ESDSAng=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Anger Subscale.
ESDSCalm=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Calmness Subscale. ESDSAPath=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Apathy Subscale. ESDSFear=Self Disclosure of Emotions-Fear Subscale. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Arguing stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRICENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory - Conflict Engagement subscale. CRIPPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving Subscale. CRISWDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. CRICOMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. MAPR-Marital Agendas Protocol-Resolution Subscale.

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

resolution measures were no longer evident for the male sample. The self-disclosure of apathy was the only ESDS subscale that was significantly correlated with the IAI, the KMCS-N, and the CRIPPS. However, as shown in Table 42b, the significance and direction of the correlations between subscales of ASDSC and ESDS with conflict resolution measures were, with the exception of some, evident for the female sample.

In summary, for the entire sample, with the exception of self-disclosure of anger, individual's level of self-disclosure of specific affects were found to be significantly related to various aspects of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors. It appears that the more individuals reported self-disclosing a range of feelings (i.e., love, happiness, sadness, depression, fear, jealousy, depression, anxiety, and apathy), the higher their self-reported levels of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors construed in the literature as constructive and effective; and likewise the less they reported engaging in what the conflict resolution literature defines as ineffective, or destructive behaviors for managing relationship conflicts. These findings were evident, for the most part, for the subsample of women, but not for the subsample of men.

Research Question 3.

Given that affective self-disclosure is related to relationship quality and implicated in conflict resolution, an examination of demographic variables that are related to affective self-disclosure would prove informative for both research and couples therapy. This study was designed to examine how certain variables such as gender, age, duration of relationship, number of children, and income are related to self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure. This hypothesis was also more exploratory in nature in that there was no specific hypothesis guiding the order of importance of the demographic variables to be

entered in the regression equation. Hierarchical stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted, where the objective was to evaluate the contribution of the demographic variables over and above the contribution of gender. Given that no a priori order existed for entering the demographic variables, a hierarchical regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) was used with a stepwise procedure to enter the demographic variables after gender was entered. Contrary to the preceding HMR conducted which controlled for 5 demographic variables (i.e., length of relationship, number of children, age, personal and household income), personal income was eliminated from these analyses because of the conceptual overlap between personal income and household income. In this manner, it was possible to focus more specifically on the contribution of the other 4 demographic variables on affective self-disclosure using the ASDSC and the ESDS. As previously mentioned, given that the ASDSC and the ESDS purport to measure conceptually a similar construct, both measures were treated as the same variable, and it was determined that it was not necessary to control for Type I error rate for both variables. Given that only one hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using each measure, it was not necessary to control for Type I error rate for this hypothesis.

As shown in Tables 43 and 44, gender of respondent, length of relationship, and household income were the variables that significantly accounted for the variance in ASDSC scores (Table 43) and for the variance in ESDS scores (Table 44). In this sample, individuals who reported higher levels of affective self-disclosure also report having lived with their partner for a shorter period of time, and report higher household income. As well, women reported engaging in greater amounts of affective self-disclosure than did men.

Table 43

Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables on Affective Self-Disclosure (ASDSC)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	Δ <u>R</u> ²
Step 1. Gender	5.73	.33	.33	.10	.11***
Step 2. Demographics					
Block 1.					
Length of Relationship	-.36	-.29	.42	.16	.07***
Block 2.					
Household Income	.57	.16	.45	.18	.02*
Variables not in equation:					
Age					
Number of Children					
Intercept	41.82				
F(3, 158)= 13.406***				Total <u>R</u> ² = .20	

Note. ASDSC=Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples.

*** p < .001* p < .05

Table 44
Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Analysis of Demographic Variables on Willingness to Self-Disclose Emotions (ESDS)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R</u>	Adj. <u>R</u> ²	<u>ΔR</u> ²
Step 1. Gender	16.15	.28	.28	.07	.08***
Step 2. Demographics					
Block 1.					
Length of Relationship	-.86	-.22	.33	.09	.03*
Block 2.					
Household Income	2.24	.19	.38	.12	.03**
Variables not in the equation.					
Age					
Number of Children					
Intercept	12.06				
F(3, 158)= 9.00***			Total <u>R</u> ² = .14		

Note. ESDS=Self-Disclosure of Emotions Scale.

*** p < .001

** p < .01

* p < .05

Discussion

This study was designed to examine how self-disclosure of affect is related to aspects of couple relationships in individuals currently living with their partner in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationship. The first aim was to examine how self-reports of affective self-disclosure relate to relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment. The second aim was to examine how self-reports of affective self-disclosure relate to aspects of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors, how it relates to various stages of the conflict resolution process, and to the self-reported frequency of resolved problem areas in the couple relationship. Of interest was also how various demographic variables related to affective self-disclosure and how these variables might influence the relationship between affective self-disclosure and aspects of the couple relationship. An additional interest was whether the self-disclosure of particular emotions (e.g., love, sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, etc.) was related to relationship satisfaction, relationship adjustment, and to aspects of relationship conflict resolution.

In general, each hypothesis was supported. The hierarchical multiple regression analyses demonstrated that affective self-disclosure scores accounted for a significant amount of variance in relationship satisfaction, relationship adjustment, and in various aspects of relationship conflict resolution. Furthermore, significant relations among the variables remained once variance due to the gender of respondent, demographic variables, and the respondent's impression management scores was partialled out. For some hypotheses, however, and depending on the affective self-disclosure scale used (the ASDSC

or ESDS), the strength of the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction, was moderated by the gender of respondent.

The findings from each hypothesis will be presented and discussed, followed by the features of the study that may have influenced the findings as well as the interpretations and generalizations that can be made. The final section will include a discussion of the implications of these findings for marital therapy and for future research directions in this area.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment.

For the most part, the data confirmed the hypothesized relationship. Affective self-disclosure scores were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment scores and these correlations were maintained once the individual's impression management scores were controlled for. As well, affective self-disclosure scores continued to explain a significant amount of the variance in relationship satisfaction and adjustment once gender and demographic variables were controlled for. Individuals who reported engaging in more frequent self-disclosures of feelings to their partner also reported greater satisfaction with their relationship and also obtained higher scores on relationship adjustment. This finding not only confirms the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment (Davidson et al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992), but also demonstrates that affective self-disclosure scores, once other variables as gender, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for, accounted for a significant amount of the variance that can be explained in relationship satisfaction and

adjustment.

One might argue that one reason for the significant relationship between the scales used to assess affective self-disclosure (i.e., ESDS) and relationship adjustment (i.e., DAS) is due to the similarity in some items across measures. Because relationship adjustment is such a broad domain, it is not surprising that both the DAS and the ESDS might tap similar concepts/items. For instance, when one looks at the item of the DAS which asks “discussing something calmly”, this item might appear similar to the item of the ESDS which asks “willing to discuss times when feeling calm”. Although these items might appear similar, they are not asking the same information. As well, when one examines the internal consistency coefficients for the DAS-SF and the ESDS or ASDSC (see Table B-1 in appendix B), the correlations indicate that the items within each scale are consistent. Furthermore, there is only 17% of the variance that is shared between the DAS-SF and the ASDSC or ESDS, indicating that both measures are not assessing the same construct.

One way of interpreting the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, is that, as individuals verbally express their feelings and emotions, they become more accessible to their partner, which can help increase awareness between partners. Indeed, as Brehm (1992) stated, “our willingness to tell another person our most intimate thoughts and feelings may be one of the clearest indicators of how we really feel about our relationship with that person”(p. 205). Such sharing of feelings can be related to decreasing uncertainty and ambiguity between partners (Altman & Taylor, 1973), and this increased awareness can be related to facilitating new styles of interacting, greater closeness and intimacy, and greater relationship satisfaction.

When the interaction between gender of respondent and affective self-disclosure was considered, it accounted for additional unique variance in relationship satisfaction over and above that accounted for by gender alone, demographic variables, or affective-self-disclosure scores alone, at least when the ASDSC measure was used. In other words, it appears as though the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction might be different for men and women. For women, it appears that the higher their self-reported levels of affective self-disclosure, using the ASDSC measure, the higher their self-reported levels of relationship satisfaction. For men, on the other hand, higher levels of affective self-disclosure were not related to higher levels of self-reported relationship satisfaction. However, this pattern of findings was demonstrated only when the ASDSC was used, but did not emerge when the ESDS was utilized.

Vera and Betz (1992) found that measures of affective self-disclosure (both the ASDSC and the ESDS) correlated positively with relationship satisfaction in both men and women. Their sample, however, consisted of younger college students ($M=19$ years old), with only 20% of the sample living with their partner, and 80% dating (average duration of relationship 19 months). The sample of individuals in the current study were much older ($M=33.9$ years), and were all cohabiting with their partners for a longer duration ($M=8.5$ years). Given that affective self-disclosure, in the current study, was negatively related to age and duration of couple relationship, and was lower in men than women, this may have contributed to the attenuation of the correlations, particularly among the older men in this study, which resulted in nonsignificant correlations between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction among the male sample, (at least when the ASDSC was used).

Taken together with Vera and Betz's (1992) findings, this suggests that any differences that might exist between men and women in affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction may be less in younger individuals who are not living with their partner and who have only been together as a couple for a shorter time period.

The finding that gender moderated the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction when the ASDSC was used but not when the ESDS was used is interesting. The research literature suggests, for the most part, that both the ESDS and ASDSC measure the same construct, namely, the self-disclosure of feelings and emotions to one's partner. As can be seen from the correlation matrix of the variables used in this study (Table 1), there is a moderate degree of variance shared between the ESDS and the ASDSC ($r = .70$). However, the differences in results obtained for this hypothesis, especially when gender was considered, suggest that the ASDSC and the ESDS are assessing somewhat different aspects of perhaps a more general construct of affective self-disclosure. This is relatively common in psychological research, and it is one reason researchers are encouraged to include multiple measures to assess any given construct (Kazdin, 1995).

The ASDSC asks individuals to respond to "how often they would actually engage in the behavior" of self-disclosing their feelings to their partner (e.g., When I feel happy, I tell my partner; When I feel sad, I tell my partner, etc.). The ESDS, on the other hand, asks individuals "how willing they would be to self-disclose a particular feeling" to their partner (e.g., "Times when you felt happy", "Times when you felt sad", etc.). For each item on the ESDS, the respondent is asked to indicate a degree of "willingness" to self-disclose certain emotions by choosing from a likert-type scale of "Totally willing to discuss this topic" to

“Not at all willing to discuss this topic”. The ESDS, compared to the ASDSC, does not ask the respondent whether or not they actually engage in the behavior of self-disclosing those feelings to their partner. One could argue, perhaps, that the ASDSC may be assessing more of a behavioral component of the affective self-disclosure variable, whereas the ESDS may be tapping/measuring one’s willingness/intention to behave, or one’s attitude or beliefs about engaging in such behavior (i.e., affective self-disclosure), and this can be viewed as different than directly asking the respondent whether or not they actually engage in the self-disclosure of feelings to their partner. This explanation might help clarify the different results obtained with the ASDSC and the ESDS. This finding may further suggest that, depending on the measure used, different results might emerge.

Hypothesis 2: Affective Self-Disclosure and Relationship Conflict Resolution.

It was hypothesized that self-disclosure of affect would be positively correlated with the individual’s perceptions of dealing with relationship conflicts in a manner that is effective. To reflect the multidimensional nature of the conflict resolution construct, several measures were employed in this study. The objective here was to examine the individual’s self-reports of various aspects of conflict resolution and how each aspect might relate to affective self-disclosure scores. It was further hypothesized that the relationship between affective self-disclosure scores and conflict resolution styles and behaviors would be maintained once the variance from the gender of respondent, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for.

The data supported these hypotheses. The relationship between affective self-disclosure and the various measures used to assess conflict resolution will be discussed

separately. Affective self-disclosure was negatively related to ineffective arguing styles. In other words, the more individuals reported that they viewed themselves and their partner as engaging in ineffective and unsatisfactory ways of handling and resolving conflicts that arose in their relationship (e.g., “We go for days without settling our differences”, “We need to improve the way we settle our differences”), the less likely they were to report engaging in affective self-disclosures. Furthermore, self-reported affective self-disclosure scores continued to account for a significant amount of unique variance in ineffective arguing styles once gender of respondent, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for.

It was found that affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to effective communication styles and behaviors at various stages of the conflict discussion and resolution process described by Gottman (1982) (i.e., the beginning stages of the conflict (referred to as “agenda-building”) where the objective is to get the issues out as they are perceived by each partner; the middle stages of the conflict (referred to as “arguing”) where the objective is for each partner to argue for their point of view and to understand the areas of disagreement between them; and the final stages of the conflict (referred to as “negotiation”) where the objective is to reach a mutually satisfactory compromise regarding the problem area). Individuals who reported engaging in high levels of affective self-disclosure were more likely to agree with statements such as, “Your partner seems to be supportive of your feelings”; “Your partner is willing to hear what you have to say”, during the agenda-building phase; with statements such as, “You are both able to clearly identify the specific things which you agree/disagree”, during the arguing phase; and were more

likely to report agreeing on a solution to their relationship problem and keep presenting options that are mutually suitable to both partners during the negotiation phase. These correlations were maintained once the gender of respondent, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for. The conflict resolution styles and behaviors evident at each stage (i.e., agenda-building, arguing, and negotiation) that correlated significantly with affective self-disclosure scores are similar to the interaction styles and behaviors that differentiated distressed and nondistressed couples in terms of marital satisfaction (Eggeman et al., 1985; Gottman, 1982). For instance, Gottman (1982) observed that distressed couples engaged more often in behaviors characterized as complaints/criticism rather than validating comments in the agenda-building phase, with hostile nonverbal behaviors during the arguing stage, and were more likely to report difficulty agreeing on a solution to their problem and keep presenting options that are not mutually suitable.

As well, certain styles of dealing with disagreements that the marital conflict resolution literature describes as constructive, were positively related to self-reports of affective self-disclosure, whereas styles of dealing with problem areas that the literature has described as destructive, were negatively related to affective self-disclosure. In particular, it was found that individuals who reported engaging in problem-focused styles of dealing with conflicts (e.g., "Focusing on the problem at hand", "Finding alternatives that are acceptable to each of us") also reported engaging in more frequent affective self-disclosures towards their partner. On the other hand, individuals who reported engaging in withdrawing styles of dealing with relationship problems (e.g., "Withdrawing, acting distant and not interested",

“Reaching a limit, shutting down, and refusing to talk any further”), or styles that were characterized as compliant (e.g., “Giving in with little attempt to present my side of the issue”, “Not defending my position”), reported engaging in less frequent affective self-disclosures toward their partner. It was interesting to find that styles defined as conflict engaging (e.g., “Throwing insults and digs”, “Getting carried away and saying things that are not meant”), which the marital resolution literature has been defined as destructive, were not related to affective self-disclosure toward their partner.

In summary, it appears that affective self-disclosure scores related positively to more constructive or effective conflict resolution styles, and correlated negatively with ineffective styles of dealing with conflicts, including compliant or withdrawing styles. This, to some extent, suggests that affective self-disclosure might also be viewed as a constructive or effective form of communication that might relate in an important way to the manner conflicts are dealt with between partners in a relationship. These findings, for the most part, provide preliminary empirical evidence that affective self-disclosure may be implicated in relationship conflict resolution. Perhaps, one way of interpreting this relationship, similar to one of the underlying assumptions of Emotionally Focused Therapy for couples (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988), is the view that as partners become more accessible to each other by verbally expressing underlying feelings of vulnerability (e.g., sadness, fear, anger, love, etc), they also become more aware of each other. As Derlega (1984, p. 4) described, self-disclosure enables “relationship partners to coordinate necessary actions and to reduce ambiguity about another’s intentions and the meaning of their behaviors.” The self-disclosure of feelings and emotions might relate not only to increased awareness between

partners, but, as Greenberg and Johnson (1988) suggest, to greater responsiveness between partners, and to new styles of interacting and effectively managing/resolving conflicts.

It was interesting that neither the ASDSC or ESDS, for both women and men, was related to conflict engaging styles of resolving conflicts. It appears that self-disclosing one's feelings, even negative ones, might be viewed as unrelated to items that assessed conflict engagement. In this study, the measure used to assess conflict engagement (CRSI-CENG) included items that were more negative and more indicative of criticism and hostility (e.g., items included "Launching personal attacks."; "Exploding and getting out of control."; "Getting carried away and saying things that are not meant.>"). The lack of relationship between affective self-disclosure and conflict engagement (as measured using the CRSI-CENG), suggests that the self-disclosure of feelings relates to relationship satisfaction, adjustment, and conflict resolution, as long as the verbal disclosures of those emotions are not accompanied by negative/critical/hostile verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors and statements. In addition to focusing on the amount/quantity of affects being self-disclosed as being important during conflict discussions and resolutions, these results also suggest the importance of considering in future research when and in what way (i.e., the nonverbals, tone of voice, the context) affective self-disclosures take place during relationship conflict discussions and resolutions.

Hypothesis 3: Affective Self-Disclosure and Frequency of Relationship Conflict

Resolutions.

The literature on communication and marital relationships suggests that couples who more frequently use effective or constructive communication strategies and problem solving

skills rather than destructive or ineffective communication styles more effectively deal with conflicts that arise in their relationship and experience greater relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Following from this, one can also assume that if partners report being able to resolve relationship conflicts when they arise in a manner they view as effective, constructive, and mutually satisfactory, they would also report relationship problems being resolved more frequently. Based on this assumption, it was hypothesized that self-disclosure of affect, viewed as an effective constructive communication style in resolving relationship conflicts, would be positively correlated with self-reports of the frequency of resolved relationship conflicts. As well, it was hypothesized that this relationship would be maintained once the reported severity of the relationship problems and the individual's impression management scores were controlled for.

The data supported the hypothesized relationship. Affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to the reported frequency of resolved conflicts. In other words, the more individuals reported self-disclosing emotions to their partners, the more they reported being able to resolve relationship conflicts more frequently. Moreover, affective self-disclosure scores continued to correlate significantly with reports of frequency of resolved relationship conflicts once the severity of reported problems and the individual's impression management scores were controlled for.

One might argue that the reason the reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts was higher in individuals who reported self-disclosing feelings more was because the problems they reported experiencing were less severe, or less relevant/important, as evidenced by the negative significant correlation between affective self-disclosures and self-

reported severity of relationship conflicts. This correlation indicates that individuals who reported higher levels of affective self-disclosure also reported experiencing relationship problem areas as less severe. However, the finding that the relationship between frequency of resolved conflicts and self-reports of affective self-disclosure was still maintained once the individual's reported severity of relationship problems was controlled for does not lend support to that argument. It is possible that they feel they are able to engage in more effective communication styles that lead to more frequent and efficient resolution of those relationship problems, thereby decreasing the perceived severity of those relationship problems. This explanation is further illustrated by findings where more effective conflict resolution strategies are related to greater frequency of problem resolutions and to problems perceived as less severe (Arellano & Markman, 1995).

Hypothesis 4: Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment and Conflict Resolution.

Based on the research on marital conflict resolution and its relation to concurrent relationship quality, it was hypothesized that relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment would be positively correlated with various conflict resolution styles and behaviors that have been described in the literature as constructive or effective, and would correlate negatively with conflict resolution styles that have been described in the literature as destructive or ineffective. To provide further evidence and clarification of the findings from previous cross-sectional research, it was hypothesized that this relationship would be maintained once gender, demographic variables, and impression management were controlled for.

The data supported the hypothesized relationships. Self-reports of relationship

satisfaction and adjustment were significantly related to various aspects of conflict resolution. Self-reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment were negatively related to the measure used to assess ineffective arguing styles. In other words, the more individuals reported viewing themselves and their partner as engaging in ineffective and unsatisfactory ways of handling and resolving conflicts that arose in their relationship (e.g., “We go for days without settling our differences”; “We need to improve the way we settle our differences”), the less likely they were to report feeling satisfied and adjusted in their relationship with their partner. The hypothesized correlations were maintained once the variance from the gender of respondent, demographic variables, and impression management scores were controlled for.

As well, individuals who reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction or relationship adjustment also reported engaging in effective styles and constructive behaviors of resolving relationship conflicts at various stages of discussing a problem area (i.e., the beginning stages of the conflict when they are building their conflict topic or agenda; the middle stages of the conflict when they are in the process of discussing their problem area; and, the final stages of the conflict when they are in the process of resolving/negotiating their problem area). These results are consistent with those observed by others (Eggeman et al., 1985; Gottman, 1982), described earlier, where distressed couples responded in a significantly different manner than nondistressed couples during all three stages of the conflict discussion process. In the current study, the communication styles and behaviors that individuals reported engaging in during the three stages of the conflict process that related to relationship satisfaction and adjustment also related to higher amounts of reported

affective self-disclosures.

The results of the current study also suggest that certain styles of dealing with disagreements related positively to reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment, whereas other styles of dealing with problem areas were negatively related to reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. In particular, individuals who reported engaging in problem-focused styles of dealing with conflicts (e.g., "Focusing on the problem at hand") also reported higher levels of satisfaction and adjustment. Individuals who reported engaging in withdrawing styles of dealing with relationship problems (e.g., "Remaining silent for long periods of time"), styles that are compliant (e.g., "Giving in with little attempt to present my side of the issue"), or styles defined as conflict engaging (e.g., "Throwing insults and digs") reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction and adjustment.

For the most part, these findings provide further evidence and clarification of the relation between effective and constructive styles of handling conflict and relationship satisfaction that has been documented in the marital conflict resolution literature (Kurdek, 1994a; 1994b). Previous studies, for instance, have also found individuals in distressed relationships are more likely to use withdrawal strategies and avoid confrontation and conflict management (Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988). Moreover, the partner's tendency to withdraw has been found to be predictive of the partner becoming hostile (Roberts & Krokoff, 1990) and of a longitudinal decline in relationship satisfaction for both partners (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Kurdek, 1994a,b). In the current study, conflict engagement styles of resolving conflicts were negatively related to relationship satisfaction and

adjustment levels, a style that some researchers have linked with changes in marital satisfaction and adjustment (Kurdek, 1994a).

Moreover, it appears as though certain styles of dealing with disagreements, characterized as more effective, constructive, and viewed as mutually satisfactory (i.e., problem focused styles) that appear to be related to higher self-reported levels of affective self-disclosures are also related to greater perceived relationship satisfaction and adjustment. On the other hand, styles of dealing with disagreements, characterized as ineffective, and not viewed as mutually satisfactory (i.e., withdrawing, and compliant styles) that appear to be related to lower self-reported levels of affective self-disclosures are also related to lower perceived relationship satisfaction and adjustment.

Hypothesis 5: Relationship Satisfaction and Adjustment and Frequency of Resolved Conflicts.

Couples with poor or ineffective problem-solving strategies are assumed to have more unresolved relationship conflicts. Ineffective problem-solving strategies not only prevent the resolution of conflicts that arise, but might also generate feelings of anger, irritation, frustration, resentment, as well as dissatisfaction. Based on this, it was hypothesized that individuals who report higher levels of relationship satisfaction and adjustment would also report greater frequency of resolved problems in the couple relationship. To provide further clarification of the results, it was hypothesized that this relationship would be maintained once gender, demographic variables, and impression management were controlled for.

The data supported the hypothesized relationships. Self-reports of the frequency of

resolved relationship conflicts were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and these correlations were maintained once the variance from the individual's impression management scores was controlled for. In other words, the more individuals reported satisfaction and adjustment in their relationship, the higher their self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts.

Once again, one can argue that one reason the frequency of resolved relationship conflicts is higher in individuals who report feeling more satisfied and adjusted in their couple relationship is because the problems they reported experiencing were less severe, less relevant or less important. In fact, findings from the correlation matrix (Table 1) demonstrate a negative relationship between reports of severity of relationship problems and relationship satisfaction and adjustment. In other words, individuals who reported greater relationship satisfaction and adjustment also reported experiencing less severe problems in their couple relationship. However, the finding that the relationship between frequency of resolved conflicts and self-reports of relationship satisfaction and adjustment levels was still maintained once the severity of reported problems was controlled for does not lend support to that argument. The reason that individuals who report greater relationship satisfaction also report experiencing problems as less severe may be because they feel they are able to engage in more effective and "constructive" strategies in dealing with relationship conflicts. In turn, this may lead to more frequent and efficient resolution of those conflicts, thereby decreasing the perceived (or actual) severity of those relationship problems, as they are dealt with more often.

Discussion of Research Questions

The following section provides a brief description of findings related to some additional questions that this study set out to examine. Due to the limited nature of the existing data in the current research literature, no directional hypotheses were provided for the following questions.

Research Question 1:

The first research question examined whether specific forms of self-reports of affective self-disclosures (i.e., love, happiness, anger, sadness), related to relationship satisfaction and adjustment. With the exception of self-disclosure of anger, reported self-disclosure levels of specific affects were found to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction and to relationship adjustment. It appears that the more individuals reported self-disclosing a range of feelings to their partner, including love, happiness, sadness, anxiety, depression, jealousy, fear, and calmness, the higher their self-reported levels of relationship satisfaction and adjustment. These findings were maintained even once impression management scores were controlled for. However, this pattern of correlations was evident only for the subsample of women in this study, not for the subsample of men.

Consistent with findings from previous studies (Snell et al., 1988, 1989), women were more willing than men to disclose feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, and fear to their partners. It appears as though, for the men sampled in this study, there was no relationship between the self-disclosure of any specific kind of feeling and relationship satisfaction. However, there were positive correlations found between the men's reported self-disclosure of feelings such as happiness, love, and apathy and relationship adjustment.

In general, and consistent with previous studies (Snell et al., 1988), the men in this sample were more willing to report self-disclosing feelings that may be perceived as more positive/neutral, and they were less willing to report self-disclosing feelings perceived to be more negative, such as anxiety, fear, depression. It may be possible, as well, that men may feel reluctant to self-disclose the more negative feelings, and may not feel comfortable reporting it, concerned about how it may be viewed by their partner (Balswick, 1988). For instance, men may think that if they hide their fears and anxiety, they might be viewed as more appealing than if they were more emotionally expressive (Zillman, Weaver, Mundorf, & Aust, 1986). On the other hand, men might view fewer advantages to hiding the more neutral or positive emotions, such as happiness and love.

The finding that emotions that can be described as more positive (ie. love, happiness, joy) and negative (i.e., depression, anxiety, fear) were related to satisfaction, at least for women, is consistent with longitudinal data which suggests that the expression of strong negative emotion correlates with increases in marital satisfaction adjustment, as long as the affect expressed was not characterized by extreme levels of anger (Krokoff, 1991). Others, however, have suggested that higher levels of negative affect is associated with poor therapy outcome (Snyder, Mangrum, & Wills, 1993). A direct comparison between the findings of this study and others is limited because the measures used to assess affective self-disclosure was different from other studies. These results, however, might add further to the suggestion that the simple positive or negative categorization of emotions is insufficient for increasing our understanding of the complex dynamics of intimate relationships (Gottman, 1994). What might be important in relationship satisfaction and adjustment is the ability and

willingness of the partner to become involved in the communication process with their partner, rather than attending to the positive or negative valence/content of the emotions expressed.

It was interesting that for the entire sample and the subsample of men, the self-disclosure of anger was not related to either relationship satisfaction or adjustment. One interpretation is that anger may not be viewed in the same category of emotions as all the other feelings. It even appears to be viewed differently than other feelings that one can describe as negative (i.e., anxiety, fear, depression, jealousy, etc.). The emotion of anger perhaps carries with it a negative meaning, and an association with aggression and hostility (Buntaine & Costenbada, 1997). In the current study, anger was the only emotion that was positively related to conflict engaging styles of resolving problems, which appears to be measuring a more critical/hostile form of dealing with issues. Perhaps the respondents may have equated the self-disclosure of anger in a similar manner as hostility or violence. For women, however, the self-disclosure of anger was positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. This relationship, however, was only evident when the ESDS was used, not the ASDSC, perhaps indicating the willingness (or belief of the importance) of self-disclosing this feeling within couple relationships, but not necessarily willing to report engaging in the actual behavior of disclosing feelings of anger. The finding that for the women in this sample, the self-disclosure of anger (as measured using the ASDSC) correlated positively with relationship satisfaction once their impression management scores were controlled for, suggests the influence of the negative social messages associated with this emotion that might be operating. In other words, although women might appear reluctant to report

engaging in self-disclosures of anger, their self-disclosure of anger appears to relate to their experienced satisfaction with their couple relationship.

Research Question 2

The second research question examined whether specific forms of self-reports of affective self-disclosures (i.e., love, happiness, anger, sadness), related to relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors. For the entire sample, with the exception of self-disclosure of anger, partner's level of self-disclosure of specific affects were found to be significantly related to various aspects of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors. It appears that the more individuals report self-disclosing a range of feelings (i.e., love, happiness, sadness, depression, fear, jealousy, depression, anxiety, and calmness, and apathy), with the exception of anger, the higher their self-reported levels of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors construed in the research literature as constructive and effective; and likewise the less they reported engaging in what the conflict resolution literature defines as ineffective, or destructive behaviors for managing relationship conflicts. These findings were evident, for the most part, for the subsample of women, but not for the subsample of men. This finding lends further support for the view that women, perhaps due to their socialization and responsibility for nurturing intimate relationships, may view the sharing of feelings (both "negative" and "positive"), as more important to the development of intimacy and closeness in relationships, and to the management and resolution of marital problems (Tannen, 1990). Consistent with the findings for the previous research question, reports of self-disclosures of feelings of anger, using either the ESDS or the ASDSC, was not related to self-reports of relationship conflict resolution styles and behaviors, whether

defined by the literature as “constructive” or “destructive”. These findings were maintained even once impression management scores were controlled for.

The finding that the willingness to self-disclose apathy (indifference) was significantly positively related to relationship satisfaction, adjustment, and to constructive and effective conflict resolution styles and behaviors, for both men and women in this sample deserves further discussion. If one views the self-disclosure of apathy as the tendency to express detachment, indifference, numbness, and/or emotional disengagement, it seems surprising that it is related positively to satisfaction and adjustment, especially in light of this study’s findings that relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and the apathy subscale of affective self-disclosure were negatively related to withdrawing styles of conflict resolution. One way of interpreting this result is that, as others have suggested, when partners are self-disclosing feelings of apathy are not necessarily indicating withdrawal, but are perhaps communicating a form of distress to their partner in a more neutral manner, without necessarily transmitting destructive criticism or hostility (Johnson & Talitman, 1997). As Gottman and Krokoff (1989) have suggested, neutral affect “may function as a probe for the clarification of the other’s feelings and concerns” (p.50). One can speculate, then, that self-disclosure of apathy may relate to greater experienced satisfaction as partners may be more aware of the conflict, and may be more responsive to dealing with the conflict, thereby increasing the probability that conflicts are resolved in a more effective and constructive manner.

Research Question 3.

The research on self-disclosure and relationship quality has demonstrated several

demographic variables, such as age of respondent, length of couple relationship, and number of children, relate to variations in self-reports of disclosure levels (Antill et al., 1987).

However, the few studies that have examined affective self-disclosure and its relation to satisfaction and adjustment levels have neglected to examine the demographic variables that might relate to affective self-disclosure and, influence the relationship between affective self-disclosure scores and various relationship aspects, including conflict resolution, relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Given that self-reports of affective self-disclosure appear to relate to various aspects of couple relationships, it was useful to examine in what manner the demographic variables correlated with this form of communication. In this study, the variables that were included as predictor variables included age and gender of respondent, reported duration of the couple relationship, number of children present, and reported household income levels.

The results demonstrate that for this sample, the variables that appear to account for the most unique variance in affective self-disclosure scores were the gender of respondent, followed by the reported duration of the couple relationship and the reported household income levels. It seems as though cohabiting with one's partner for a longer time, lower reported household income levels, and being a male, relates to lower levels of reported self-disclosure of emotions to one's partner. These findings were similar for the ASDSC and the ESDS.

The gender of the respondent contributed the most unique variance in affective self-disclosure scores. In particular, it appears that women, more so than men, reported greater amounts of affective self-disclosure. Several factors may explain the finding that gender of

respondent accounts for the greatest amount of variance in affective self-disclosure scores. To begin, differences in sample size, with fewer men participating in this study compared to women (a ratio of 2 to 3), may have influenced the findings obtained. A more probable explanation, on the other hand, is that there were true differences between men and women, at least in this sample, for the affective self-disclosure measures. This finding reflects previous results found in the marital communication literature, where women, more so than men, report engaging in more frequent expression of their feelings (e.g., Levinger & Senn, 1967; Snell et al., 1988; Snell et al., 1989; Vera & Betz, 1992).

One explanation for the gender differences in affective self-disclosure is the socialization differences between men and women. Women have been socialized to focus on interpersonal relationships and to be able to respond to the needs and feelings of others, and are perhaps expected to be relationship experts. Research has shown that both men and women tend to assume that women are more responsible for relationships and are better at maintaining them (Tannen, 1990). Because intimate relationships are not promoted in the masculine socialization of men, they tend to be less aware of and perhaps less skilled in interpreting marital interactions (Christensen & Heavey, 1993; Wood, 1993), and, as one consequence, are less likely to take an active role in responding to marital problems (Rusbult, 1987). Women may attempt to compensate for their husband's lack of relationship competence by initiating discussion, suggestions, and problem-solving activities (Rusbult, Johnson, & Marrow, 1986). In a summary of this research area, Thompson and Walker (1989) concluded that women "have more responsibility than their husbands for monitoring the marital relationship, confronting disagreeable issues, setting the tone of conversation,

and moving toward resolution when conflict is high” (Thompson & Walker, 1989, p. 849).

Due to women’s socialization and responsibility for nurturing intimate relationships, they may view the sharing of feelings as more important to the development of intimacy and closeness in relationships, and to the management of marital problems. As a result they might place a greater effort in expressing their feelings and needs to their partner in an effort to deal with relationship issues. This might help explain why women are viewed as more emotionally expressive than men.

Another explanation for the gender differences in reported affective self-disclosure, which probably stems from the different socialization experiences of men and women, can be related to the possible differences existing between men and women in their perception of their ability to engage in the communication of feelings and emotions. In other words, women, due to socialization messages/influences of being nurturant and responsive to the needs of others, and to take an active role in dealing with marital problems, might perceive themselves as more skilled (higher self-efficacy) in engaging in communication and attempting to resolve conflicts and may have greater self-esteem and confidence in their ability to do this. A study by Vera and Betz (1992), found self-regard (used as a measure of self-efficacy) to be positively related to affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction for women, but not for men. This suggests that men might perceive themselves as being less efficacious in their ability (i.e., interpersonal skills) to communicate and express feelings to their partner. This, in turn, might contribute to men not engaging in as much affective self-disclosure as they might not feel as confident doing it (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989), and/or use that form of communication to influence their relationship satisfaction levels. This

interpretation is consistent with studies that have demonstrated that an individual's level of self-efficacy/self-confidence with respect to their own performance capabilities was related to their satisfaction in relationships (Lopez & Lent, 1991). In the study by Vera and Betz (1992), women's self-esteem scores (as measured by self-regard) were positively related to affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. Self-esteem or self-efficacy can influence a number of relationship variables, one of which is the ability/confidence to communicate needs, concerns, and feelings to one's partner. Moreover, an individual who possesses high self-regard/self-esteem would also recognize both their own as well as another's right to have feelings, needs, and desires that are important and different from ones own. As one consequence, there would be no need for the high self-esteem person to deny and/or feel anxious regarding the expression of different feelings and opinions, and as a result, communication toward their partner would be direct and honest. This notion was supported by Schumm, Figley and Fuhs (1981), who found significant negative correlations between self-esteem and anxiety concerning self-disclosure.

The finding that couples who have cohabited longer, whether or not they reported being married, also report engaging in less self-disclosure of feelings with their partner is not surprising. One way of interpreting this result is that the longer the individual has lived with his/her partner, the less they feel the need to engage in great amounts of self-disclosure as they may have earlier in their couple relationship. It may be that they feel they have shared much information already, or they might assume their partner already knows how they feel, and therefore might not feel the need to continue self-disclosing as frequently. As well, it may be that the reported amounts of affective self-disclosures may decrease the longer one is

living with their partner because the quality of their self-disclosure changes throughout the course of their relationship with their partner (Bogard & Spilka, 1996). Although this aspect of affective self-disclosure was not directly examined in this study, previous research by Altman and Taylor (1973), demonstrated that although the breadth (or amount) of self-disclosure seems to be greater during earlier stages of the couple relationship, the depth (or quality) of their self-disclosures appears to increase the longer couples are together. In other words, individuals who have been cohabiting with their partner for longer periods may spend less time self-disclosing many different things at perhaps a more superficial level to their partner, but may be investing more time providing additional information (i.e., honesty, intentionality) about the feelings they are self-disclosing to their partner (Bogard & Spilka, 1996).

An interesting finding was that reported levels of the household income (the respondent's and partner's combined income) was weakly, but positively related to self-reports of affective self-disclosure. The variance in affective self-disclosure accounted for by income is small and could be related to numerous factors. Moreover, it is difficult to determine what this variance is due to, especially as the income range for all respondents is limited. One can speculate, however, that greater household income might suggest that both partners of the couple are employed (probably full-time) and contributing income to the relationship. It has been suggested, for instance, that dual career couples (where both partners are employed) are more emotionally in touch with each other and have greater mutual sharing of personal information (Yogev, 1981), perhaps because partners view each other as more equal and more able to understand each other's concerns. One can also

speculate that both partners probably have higher education compared to partners of lower income households. Although education level of the respondent was not included as a control variable in the hierarchical regressions, the results that describe the demographic characteristics of the participants demonstrate that as a group, this sample of respondents, compared to the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1996a), generally have higher levels of education (see Table A1 in Appendix A). Previous studies have indicated that higher education levels are positively associated with both perceptions of spouse equality and with a high value placed on self-disclosure (Rosenfeld & Welsh, 1985). Therefore, although both partners may be busy with employment-related activities, partners who have both completed higher levels of education might be aware of the importance and potential benefits of communicating with each other, and might therefore view it a priority, making greater effort to find the time to self-disclose feelings and discuss issues that arise in their relationship.

Limitations of the Study

The preceding sections described the major findings and provided some explanations for the pattern of results obtained. Nonetheless, there are limitations in the methodological design of this study that are important to consider, as they might influence the interpretations and generalizations of these findings. These issues will be briefly outlined below.

Use of Volunteer Sample: Possible Selection Biases.

One of the strengths of the present study is that it involved a heterogeneous sample of individuals currently cohabiting with their partner. As well, most couples in this study had at least one child living with them, which is quite representative of the Canadian

population (Statistics Canada, 1996c) as well as individuals living in the National Capital region (Statistics Canada, 1996f). This sample is different from those of previous studies who have used samples of individuals who are college or university students (e.g., Snell et al., 1988; Vera & Betz, 1992), or whose relationship duration is relatively short, (e.g., Davidson et. al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992), or are maritally distressed (Walsh et al., 1993).

Nonetheless, there is the potential for selection biases when utilizing a volunteer sample of individuals drawn from the population, which may affect the validity and generalizability of the results (Bordens & Abbott, 1996). The individuals who expressed an interest in volunteering for the study may not be representative of the larger population of individuals in marital and common-law relationships. For instance, as demonstrated through the demographic characteristics presented in the method section, the participants who took part in this study, when compared to the norm for Canadian couples (Statistics Canada, 1996a), are more highly educated adults, characteristics consistent with those of volunteer participants found by other researchers (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). This means, among other things, that the findings from this study may not necessarily be representative of the average Canadian couple, but rather, may better represent Canadian couples with greater education.

Utilization of Self-Report Data: Possible Influence on Validity.

The data gathered in this study were based on the individual's self-report of the psychological variables of interest, and hence, were their self-perceptions, as opposed to actual observational data of the process between affective self-disclosure and resolution of conflicts. Self-report measures may contain biases in the reporting of relationship processes

that would be minimized by having neutral outside observers code actual behaviors and exchanges that occur in couple relationships. As well, the use of self-report measures might not capture certain dyadic processes that would be readily available to an observer coding such interactions. However, this study did include an impression management (IM) measure to control for the possible influence of response biases influencing the correlations. Once the individual's IM scores were controlled for, the hypothesized correlations were still evident, a finding consistent with previous research (Hunsley et al., 1996; Jorgenson & Gaudy, 1980).

A further feature of this study which may have influenced the validity and accuracy of the data obtained is the fact that the questionnaire package was completed at the individual's home and returned by mail. This methodological design feature may have influenced the validity of the data obtained, as there was no direct method of verifying if indeed the questionnaires were completed in an honest manner without the influence of their partner's responses. However, the individual was instructed, on several occasions, during the telephone recruitment and subsequently on the cover letter that was included in the questionnaire package that was sent to their home, about the importance of completing the questionnaire on their own, without discussing their responses with their partner (see Appendix C). Furthermore, although there was a draw held for the chance for one participant to win \$100.00, the participation for this study was completely voluntary, and there was no apparent reason for the respondent to want to jeopardize the quality of the data provided and results obtained (i.e., they were not being paid, or required to participate for course credit, their participation was not due to any clinical or legal proceeding). One can

assume, therefore, that their interest in participating and contributing their time was of a genuine nature, that is, wanting to help the researchers and wanting to contribute to the further understanding of couple relationships. Based on this assumption, there does not appear to be any reason for the participants not to respond in an honest manner.

An aspect that may have influenced not only the participation rate, but also the kind of responses provided, was the nature and wording of some scales included in the package. Some measures used for the study might have required a considerable amount of self-awareness and psychological sophistication. Among other things, this may have attracted the interest of individuals with higher education, which was evident from the demographic characteristics of the sample. As already mentioned, individuals who volunteer their time and energy to participate, complete the questionnaire, and return it, are individuals who are perhaps more highly educated and motivated to take an interest in activities around them perceived as important, and may be more willing to give some of their time to contribute to research (Bordens & Abbott, 1996). As demonstrated through the demographic characteristics presented, the participants who took part in this study, were on average highly educated adults. Furthermore, the education level and psychological sophistication of the questionnaires, and the requirement of participants to be self-aware and disclose personal information, might have reduced the involvement of more distressed couples, where they may have had more difficulty attending to and take the time to complete such questions.

Utilization of Cross-Sectional Design.

This study assessed a sample at one point in time. Participants were not assessed at a later date. Such a cross-sectional design is simple, inexpensive, and allows for the collection

of data in a relatively short period of time. Although there are advantages to using a cross-sectional design, this method offers limited information regarding the actual changes and processes that might take place between affective self-disclosure, conflict resolution behaviors and styles, and relationship quality, such as satisfaction and adjustment. The use of a cross-sectional design does not allow us to examine the causality in the variables of interest. Consequently, there can be no assumption that affective self-disclosure leads to effective conflict resolution or relationship satisfaction, because relationship satisfaction may promote effective conflict resolution and affective self-disclosures, where it may be easier to disclose feelings and resolve problems in the context of a happy relationship. A longitudinal design, where the variables of affective-self-disclosure, relationship satisfaction, and conflict resolution are examined at various periods through the couple relationship, though more expensive and very time-consuming, can provide a different, and perhaps a more complete look at the nature and process of affective self-disclosure and how it relates to various aspects of couple relationships. As we have seen from some of the longitudinal studies, communication styles that appear to relate to relationship satisfaction and adjustment in the short-term may actually predict relationship dissatisfaction over time (e.g., Smith et al., 1991). Further, frequent conflict areas that relate to concurrent relationship dissatisfaction do not necessarily predict relationship dissatisfaction or dissolution over time (Gottman, 1994; Kurdek, 1994b; Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). It might be, then, that some of the affects self-disclosed (i.e., apathy, depression, fear, jealousy) that are positively related to concurrent satisfaction and adjustment levels and to various aspects of conflict resolution in the short term, might be related negatively (i.e., viewed as more ineffective, or even

destructive forms of communication) in the long-term.

Studying Only One Partner of a Couple:

The focus of this study was the relation between the variables of interest and, because there were no within couple comparisons being made, it was sufficient to include only one partner of the couple. However, the disadvantage of assessing only one partner of the couple is that it prevents the researcher from exploring each partner's reactions to their partner's responses, and in turn, how those reactions influence the other's affective self-disclosure levels, conflict resolutions, relationship satisfaction and adjustment. Walsh and colleagues (1993), for instance, in observing maritally distressed couples share thoughts and feelings, found that the valence, focus, and gender appeared to affect the likelihood that the partner would respond with a negative or a nonnegative message. Other researchers, as well, have found that reciprocity of affective self-disclosure was more important than quantity of affective self-disclosure in how it related to relationship satisfaction levels (Davidson et al., 1983). It would be important to see how this relates to aspects of relationship conflict resolution.

Quantity of Statistical Analyses Conducted: Influence of Type I Error

Finally, the large number of hypotheses and analyses may have increased the possibility of Type I error. An attempt was made to minimize the influence of a Type I error by applying a Bonferroni correction procedure to the alpha levels for each analysis conducted within a given hypothesis (Kirk, 1968). Despite the application of this stringent procedure, results for the major hypotheses, for the most part, remained significant. It is unlikely, therefore, that the main results of this study are simply a result of Type I errors.

Implications for Research and for Marital Therapy

In general, this study provides empirical support for the relationship between affective self-disclosure and various aspects of conflict resolution and relationship quality, at least as these variables were operationalized in this study and as assessed with a relatively educated and nondistressed sample of individuals cohabiting in a heterosexual relationship. These findings also add to the existing literature on the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship quality (satisfaction and adjustment). In particular, the results of the study provided further evidence for the positive relation between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment, and this relation was further clarified by controlling for gender, demographic variables, and impression management scores. Compared to previous studies (Davidson et al., 1983; Vera & Betz, 1992), these findings were demonstrated using a sample of older individuals living in a marital-type relationship for a longer period, and where half of the participants had children living with them, thus more representative of the Canadian couple living in a marital-type relationship. These results help provide further clarification and validation of the relation between affective self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction and adjustment.

As well, this study provided empirical evidence for the relationship between affective self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolution. Affective self-disclosure was positively related to conflict resolution styles described as effective, including problem-focused styles, and negatively related to conflict resolution styles described as ineffective, including withdrawing and complaining styles. The more individuals reported that they viewed themselves and their partners as engaging in effective and satisfactory ways of

handling relationship conflicts, the more likely they were to report engaging in affective self-disclosures. As well, affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to effective styles and behaviors found at various stages of the conflict discussion and resolution process (i.e., the agenda-building, arguing, and negotiation stage). Further, affective self-disclosure scores were positively related to the self-reported frequency of resolved relationship conflicts. The more individuals reported self-disclosing emotions to their partners, the more they reported being able to resolve relationship conflicts more frequently. These preceding relationships were maintained once additional factors, such as impression management scores, gender, and demographic variables were controlled for. In some of the findings, the relation between affective self-disclosure, conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction was different for men and women. Keeping in mind the correlational nature of the data and the need for further study, these findings can nonetheless begin to create a map to help researchers focus on particular variables that might provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between affective self-disclosure, conflict resolution, and relationship quality. The following points can serve as additional avenues that can be considered, in addition to those already discussed in the previous sections.

The pattern of findings reported in this investigation suggests the need to further explore gender differences in affective self-disclosures and relationship functioning, in particular, how men and women differ in their construal of relationships. There is a growing literature that describes the role of cognitive variables in marital distress and how self-perceptions are related to cognitions/beliefs and affect (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Hafford & Sanders, 1990). For instance, within the marital literature, studies have demonstrated how

partners who are depressed, or unhappy/distressed, are more likely to view their relationship in a more negative light, or recall more negative verbal or behavioral interactions with their partner compared to partners who are not depressed, and this, in turn, influences their degree of satisfaction with their relationship (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Sher & Baucom, 1993). In a different line of research, Davidson and colleagues (1983) found that individuals who indicated high levels of marital adjustment were more likely than those who indicated low levels of marital adjustment to selectively distort their perceptions of the disclosures they received from their partners. These authors, using social exchange theory to explain this process, suggested that when partners perceive inequity (i.e., an unbalance) in their relationship, they attempt to restore balance by distorting reality (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). These authors found that the partner's perception of discrepancies in affective self-disclosure were more important in explaining marital distress than were actual discrepancies (Davidson et al., 1983). Future research might examine how such perceptions of equity, and discrepancies in equity, as described by social exchange theory relate to the affective-self-disclosure and relationship conflict resolutions between partners, and how such relationships might differ between men and women.

Examining cognitive variables such as relationship beliefs and expectations (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982) might be particularly important in trying to understand some of the gender differences in affective self-disclosure, as research has suggested that men and women, depending on their gender roles (i.e., masculinity, femininity) appear to share a number of traditional beliefs about intimate relationships (Bem, 1974). It would also be important to consider how relevant/important couples perceive the exploration and

expression of emotions when trying to deal with relationship issues, and how this might relate to conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction. Future work, in addition, might explore how, and if, men and women differ in expectations regarding the role of affective self-disclosure in resolving conflicts, and in developing and maintaining intimacy. It would be important to consider this aspect, as it might relate to couple's intent and/or motivation to utilize expression of emotions as a communication style to resolve relationship conflicts that arise. Future consideration of the possible gender differences in perceptions of the role of affective self-disclosure in couple relationships, can also assist researchers in better understanding whether men and women might differ in how they respond to affective self-disclosure from their partner.

Related to the role of individual's cognitions in communication and conflict resolution is the individual's perception of the conflict area/problem issue itself, where studies have demonstrated that certain problem areas can influence relationship satisfaction (Kurdek, 1994b). It would be important to consider the individual's perceptions of the conflict areas being discussed (i.e., the importance/value placed on/or the genuine interest each partner has regarding the problem area being discussed), and not simply focus on the conflict resolution strategies couples use. Studies, for instance, have demonstrated that partner's perception of legitimate interest and its role in conflict management may be important in couple conflict (Klein & Lamm, 1996).

A separate avenue to consider in future research is the nature of gender differences in some variables, such as relationship self-efficacy (confidence) and the influence on affective self-disclosure, as this have been suggested as one possible explanation for some of

the observed gender differences in affective self-disclosure (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; Vera & Betz, 1992), and previous research has suggested the possible role of a couple's perception of efficacy in mediating their ability to resolve conflicts (Sher & Adams, 1983).

An important consideration for future research is to understand, in a truly comprehensive manner, the relationship between affective self-disclosure in other aspects of the couple's relationship. To date, most of the research has focused primarily on the ways couples communicate when they are attempting to resolve a problem. However, within the context of an intimate relationship, communicating thoughts and feelings serves purposes other than problem-solving (Baucom, Sayers, & Sher, 1990). It would, therefore, be informative to examine how couples engage in affective self-disclosure at other moments, and how this relates to their using this form of communication during the resolution of conflicts. Walsh and colleagues (1993), for instance, found that distressed spouses had a tendency to respond in a similar manner to their partners' preceding message during conversations where they were sharing thoughts and feelings (and not engaged in solving a problem), and this style of communication/responding is also evident in conversations where distressed couples are attempting to solve problems (Margolin & Wampold, 1981). This might suggest, for the most part, that there may be a rigidity in emotional responsiveness that might exist in all contexts for maritally distressed couples compared to nondistressed couples.

The gender differences observed in emotional self-disclosure levels may have important implications for marital therapy. The finding in this study, as well as in previous studies, is that women are more willing to engage in disclosure of emotions (even negative

emotions) towards their partner, or towards people in general (Snell et al., 1988), and towards therapists (Snell et al., 1989). In a context where the therapist expects/encourages emotional self-disclosure (for example, in EFT), women might be at a greater advantage in addressing and resolving difficult conflictual issues compared to men. Whereas women benefit more from emotionally focused approaches to couples therapy, men, on the other hand, might be at a disadvantage, and might benefit less from couple therapy approaches that focus on provoking emotional awareness and expression. With assistance from marital therapists, and/or their partners, men might benefit the most from a marital therapy approach that focuses on increasing awareness and expression of emotions. A study by Johnson and Talitman (1997) found that, although men reported less self-disclosure at intake (ie., before therapy began), the men who were described by their partners as being the least emotionally expressive appeared to benefit the most from an emotionally focused therapy (EFT) approach at outcome. This underscores the point that differences in valuing the role of affect and affective self-disclosure needs attention by therapists, and this should influence the manner in which therapists work with couples.

It is apparent that affective self-disclosure is an important communication style related to various aspects of the couple relationship. This study provides empirical support for the relationship between affective self-disclosure and various aspects of conflict resolution and relationship quality, at least as these variables were assessed with a relatively educated and nondistressed sample of individuals cohabiting in a heterosexual relationship. It would be important try to replicate this study in order to examine if the present findings generalize to another sample with similar characteristics as the present sample. Future work

can then proceed by focusing on the above mentioned implications in terms of clarifying the nature and direction of the relationship between affective self-disclosure, conflict resolution, and relationship quality. It would be important to include the preceding suggestions initially in self-report questionnaire format in order to examine the relationship between these variables. Future research can then follow-up with actual behavioral observations, so that researchers can begin to unravel the process (each partner's responses/reactions to the other partner's self-disclosures, etc). Eventually longitudinal studies would be an important component to try to understand the possible cause and effect relationship among these variables, and how these variables might contribute to the overall development and maintenance of marital relationships. Once researchers can establish a greater literature that provides us with information on the process of affective self-disclosure, when and how often it takes places, and in what kind of interactions, then we can begin constructing models to perhaps address the cause and effect relationship between affective self-disclosure and other relationship variables, and to see how useful such affective self-disclosures are, and if indeed it contributes anything at all to the understanding of intimate relationships.

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APPENDIX A

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Table A-1
Highest Level of Education Obtained (Percentage).

Education Level	Total Sample (<u>N</u> =162)	Women (<u>n</u> =98)	Men (<u>n</u> =64)
Some High School	7.4	4.1	12.5
High School Graduate	9.3	11.2	6.3
Some Community College	11.7	10.2	14.1
Community College Graduate	14.2	17.3	9.4
Some University	11.1	11.2	10.9
University Graduate	24.1	25.5	21.9
Some Graduate Work	4.3	7.1	0
Graduate Degree	16.0	12.2	21.9
Other	1.9	1.0	3.1

Table A-2
Reported Employment Status (Percentage).

Employment Status	Total Sample (<u>N</u> =162)	Women (<u>n</u> =98)	Men (<u>n</u> =64)
Employed Full-Time	50.6	39.8	67.2
Employed Part-Time	12.3	14.3	9.4
Full Time Homemaker	8.0	13.3	0
Unemployed	8.0	9.2	6.3
Full-Time Student	6.8	0.2	1.6
Retired	2.4	2.0	3.1
Other			
Disability	1.9	1	3.1
Self-Employed	8.0	7.1	9.4
Part-Time Student	1.2	2.0	0
Maternity Leave	0.6	1.0	0

Table A-3

Personal Yearly Income (Percentage).

Yearly Income (\$)	Total Sample (<u>N</u> =162)	Women (<u>n</u> =98)	Men (<u>n</u> =64)
Less than 5,000	11.1	18.4	0
5,000 to 9,999	6.2	7.1	4.7
10,000 to 14,999	9.3	13.3	3.1
15,000 to 19,999	11.1	15.3	14.1
20,000 to 24,999	3.7	4.1	3.1
25,000 to 29,999	19.1	11.2	7.8
30,000 to 39,999	11.7	10.2	25.0
40,000 to 49,999	15.4	15.3	15.6
50,000 to 59,999	8.0	2	17.2
60,000 to 69,999	1.2	1	1.6
70,000 or more	3.1	0	7.8

Table A-4

Combined Yearly Income (Percentage).

Yearly Income (\$)	Total sample (<u>N</u> =162)	Women (<u>n</u> =98)	Men (<u>n</u> =64)
5,000 to 9,999	1.9	2.0	1.6
10,000 to 14,999	4.3	6.1	1.6
15,000 to 19,999	3.1	4.1	1.6
20,000 to 24,999	4.3	4.1	4.7
25,000 to 29,999	4.3	4.1	4.7
30,000 to 39,999	6.2	4.1	9.4
40,000 to 49,999	11.1	11.2	10.9
50,000 to 59,999	25.3	22.4	29.7
60,000 to 69,999	11.1	11.2	10.9
70,000 or more	28.4	30.6	25

APPENDIX B

**SELF-REPORT MEASURES
USED IN STUDY**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

We would like to ask some questions to help us know the range of people participating in this study. We need some general information about you and your relationship with your partner. Please circle the response that best describes you, and where indicated, please fill in the information requested.

- ▶ What is your gender?
 - 1. MALE
 - 2. FEMALE

- ▶ What is your age? _____ years.

- ▶ What is your mother tongue (i.e., your first language)?
 - 1. ENGLISH
 - 2. FRENCH
 - 3. OTHER _____.

- ▶ To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you belong? (Check all that apply):

▶ _____ CANADIAN	▶ _____ CHINESE
▶ _____ FRENCH	▶ _____ JEWISH
▶ _____ ENGLISH	▶ _____ POLISH
▶ _____ GERMAN	▶ _____ PORTUGUESE
▶ _____ SCOTTISH	▶ _____ SOUTH ASIAN
▶ _____ IRISH	▶ _____ BLACK
▶ _____ ITALIAN	▶ _____ NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN
▶ _____ UKRANIAN	▶ _____ METIS
▶ _____ DUTCH (Netherlands)	▶ _____ INUIT/ESKIMO
	▶ _____ OTHER (please specify)

- ▶ Do you and your partner currently live at the same address?
 - 1. NO
 - 2. YES

- ▶ How many years have you and your partner lived together as a couple? _____ year _____ months.

- ▶ Are you and your partner married?
 - 1. NO
 - 2. YES (If yes, how long? _____ years _____ months)

- ▶ Do you and your partner have any children?
 1. NO
 2. YES (If yes, how many? _____).
 - ▶ If yes, do they currently live with you?
 1. NO
 2. YES

- ▶ What is your employment status? (Circle one only)
 1. EMPLOYED FULL-TIME
 2. EMPLOYED PART-TIME
 3. FULL TIME HOMEMAKER
 4. UNEMPLOYED
 5. IN SCHOOL FULL-TIME
 6. RETIRED
 7. _____
 - OTHER _____.

- ▶ If employed, what is your present occupation? (please specify): _____.

- ▶ What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Please circle only one).

1. NO FORMAL EDUCATION	7. SOME UNIVERSITY
2. GRADE SCHOOL	8. UNIVERSITY GRADUATE
3. SOME HIGH SCHOOL	9. SOME GRADUATE WORK
4. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	10. GRADUATE DEGREE
5. SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE	11. OTHER (SPECIFY) _____.
6. COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATE	

- ▶ Which of the following broad categories best describes **YOUR PERSONAL** gross income and the **COMBINED** gross income for you and your partner?

(Circle only one)	(Circle only one)
<u>YOUR PERSONAL INCOME</u>	<u>COMBINED INCOME</u>
1. LESS THAN 5,000	1. LESS THAN 5,000
2. 5,000 to 9,999	2. 5,000 to 9,999
3. 10,000 to 14,999	3. 10,000 to 14,999
4. 15,000 to 19,999	4. 15,000 to 19,000
5. 20,000 to 24,999	5. 20,000 to 24,999
6. 25,000 to 29,999	6. 25,000 to 29,999
7. 30,000 to 39,999	7. 30,000 to 39,999
8. 40,000 to 49,999	8. 40,000 to 49,999
9. 50,000 to 59,999	9. 50,000 to 59,999
10. 60,000 to 69,999	10. 60,000 to 69,999
11. 70,000 OR MORE	11. 70,000 OR MORE

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE - SHORT FORM (DAS-SF)

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list (Please circle one answer for each question).

► Philosophy of life.....	ALWAYS AGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE	OCCASIONALLY DISAGREE	FREQUENTLY DISAGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE	ALWAYS DISAGREE
► Aims, goals, and things believed important.....	ALWAYS AGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE	OCCASIONALLY DISAGREE	FREQUENTLY DISAGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE	ALWAYS DISAGREE
► Amount of time spent together.....	ALWAYS AGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE	OCCASIONALLY DISAGREE	FREQUENTLY DISAGREE	ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE	ALWAYS DISAGREE

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

► Have a stimulating exchange of ideas....	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	ONCE A DAY	MORE OFTEN
► Calmly discuss something.....	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	ONCE A DAY	MORE OFTEN
► Work together on a project.....	NEVER	LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	ONCE A DAY	MORE OFTEN

The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

·
 EXTREMELY FAIRLY A LITTLE HAPPY VERY EXTREMELY PERFECT
 UNHAPPY UNHAPPY UNHAPPY HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY

KANSAS MARITAL SATISFACTION SCALE (KMSS)

We would like you to respond to some questions regarding your views of your relationship with your partner. Using the following scale, please indicate your level of satisfaction in the following areas by choosing the number that best describes your view.

1 = EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

2 = VERY DISSATISFIED

3 = SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED

4 = MIXED

5 = SOMEWHAT SATISFIED

6 = VERY SATISFIED

7 = EXTREMELY SATISFIED

- ▶ _____ How satisfied are you with your relationship?
- ▶ _____ How satisfied are you with your partner?
- ▶ _____ How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?

EMOTIONAL SELF-DISCLOSURE SCALE (ESDS)

The following questions are aimed at trying to understand how partners communicate with each other. Some questions may sound similar to the previous ones, but it is to try to get as complete a picture as possible. Please respond to the following items by choosing the number that best describes how often you are willing to discuss that topic with your partner (Using the scale 1 = NOT AT ALL WILLING TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC and 5 = TOTALLY WILLING TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC).

Depression Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt depressed. (1)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt discouraged. (9)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt pessimistic. (17)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt sad. (25)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt unhappy. (33)

Happiness Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt happy. (2)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt cheerful. (10)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt joyous. (18)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt delighted. (26)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt pleased. (34)

Jealousy Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt jealous. (3)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt possessive. (11)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt envious. (19)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt suspicious. (27)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt resentful. (35)

Anxiety Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt anxious. (4)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt troubled. (12)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt worried. (20)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt uneasy. (28)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt flustered. (36)

Note.

The numbers in bracket refer to the sequential placement of the items on the ESDS, and to the order of the questions as they appeared in the package.

EMOTIONAL SELF-DISCLOSURE SCALE (ESDS) (Continued)**Anger Subscale.**

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt angry. (5)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt infuriated. (13)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt irritated. (21)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt hostile. (29)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt enraged. (37)

Calmness Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt calm. (6)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt quiet. (14)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt serene. (22)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt tranquil. (30)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt relaxed. (38)

Apathy Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt apathetic. (7)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt indifferent. (15)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt numb. (23)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt unfeeling. (31)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt detached. (39)

Fear Subscale.

- ▶ _____ Times when you felt afraid. (8)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt fearful. (16)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt frightened. (24)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt scared. (32)
- ▶ _____ Times when you felt alarmed. (40)

Note.

The numbers in bracket refer to the sequential placement of the items on the ESDS, and to the order of the questions as they appeared in the package.

AFFECTIVE SELF-DISCLOSURE SCALE FOR COUPLES (ASDSC)

Another area of interest in our study is to know the various ways that partners communicate with one another. Please respond to the following questions by circling the response that best describes how often the following occur in your relationship. Please be as honest as possible. (Circle only one answer for each question).

- 1= NEVER
- 2= SELDOM
- 3= OFTEN
- 4= VERY OFTEN

Love Subscale.

- ▶ _____ When I do feel love toward my partner, I tell him/her.(1)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel tenderness towards my partner, I tell him/her.(5)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel warmth toward my partner, I tell him/her.(9)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel affection toward my partner, I tell him/her.(13)

Happiness Subscale.

- ▶ _____ When I do feel happy I tell my partner.(2)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel delight I tell my partner.(6)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel joy I tell my partner.(10)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel elation I tell my partner.(14)

Anger Subscale.

- ▶ _____ When I do feel angry toward my partner, I tell him/her.(3)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel hate toward my partner, I tell him/her.(7)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel resentment toward my partner, I tell him/her.(11)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel rage I tell my partner.(15)

Sadness Subscale.

- ▶ _____ When I do feel sorrow I tell my partner.(4)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel grief I tell my partner.(8)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel sad I tell my partner.(12)
- ▶ _____ When I do feel blue I tell my partner.(16)

Note: The numbers in bracket refer to the sequential placement of the items on the ASDSC.

MARITAL AGENDAS PROTOCOL (MAP)

PART A: Severity of Problem (MAPS)

Consider the list below of relationship issues that all couples must face. Please rate how much of a problem each area currently is in your relationship by writing a number from 0 (NOT AT ALL A PROBLEM) to 100 (A SEVERE PROBLEM). For example, if children were somewhat of a problem you might enter 25 beside "Children". If children were not a problem in your relationship, you might enter a 0 beside "Children". If children were a severe problem, you might enter 100. Be sure to rate all areas.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| ▶ _____ MONEY | ▶ _____ FRIENDS |
| ▶ _____ COMMUNICATION | ▶ _____ ALCOHOL & DRUGS |
| ▶ _____ IN-LAWS | ▶ _____ CHILDREN |
| ▶ _____ SEX | ▶ _____ JEALOUSY |
| ▶ _____ RELIGION | |
| ▶ _____ RECREATION | |

PART B: Perception of Resolution of Problem (MAPR)

Out of every ten disagreements in each marital area below, how many do you believe you and your partner resolve to your mutual satisfaction? Enter a number from 0 to 10 in each of the boxes below.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| ▶ _____ MONEY | ▶ _____ FRIENDS |
| ▶ _____ COMMUNICATION | ▶ _____ ALCOHOL & DRUGS |
| ▶ _____ IN-LAWS | ▶ _____ CHILDREN |
| ▶ _____ SEX | ▶ _____ JEALOUSY |
| ▶ _____ RELIGION | |
| ▶ _____ RECREATION | |

KANSAS MARITAL CONFLICT SCALE (KMCS)

Agenda Building Subscale of the Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (KMCS-A)

Please use the following scale and indicate how often you and your partner engage in the activities mentioned in each question. Please indicate how often by recording the number in the space to the left of each item.

- 1 = NEVER
- 2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
- 3 = SOMETIMES
- 4 = FREQUENTLY
- 5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

When you and your partner are beginning to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, how often:

- ▶ _____ Do you both begin to understand each other's feelings reasonably quickly?
- ▶ _____ Do you both get your points across to each other without too much trouble?
- ▶ _____ Do you both begin to appreciate each other's points of view on the matter fairly soon?
- ▶ _____ Does your partner seem to be supportive of your feelings about your disagreement?
- ▶ _____ Does your partner tell you that you shouldn't feel the way you do about the issue? (R)
- ▶ _____ Is your partner willing to really hear what you want to communicate?
- ▶ _____ Does your partner insist on contradicting many of your ideas on the issue before he/she even understands what your ideas are? (R)
- ▶ _____ Does your partner make you feel that your views, even if different from his/hers, are really important to him/her?
- ▶ _____ Does your partner seem more interested in justifying his/her own point of view rather than in understanding yours? (R)
- ▶ _____ Does your partner let you feel upset or angry without putting you down for it?
- ▶ _____ Does your partner blame you for any of your feelings of frustration or irritation as if they were mostly your own fault, non of his/hers? (R)

Note: Items reflect the order of actual presentation of questionnaire.
(R) indicates item is reverse scored.

Arguing Subscale of the Kansas Marital Conflict Scale. (KMCS-D)

Once again, please use the following scale and indicate how often you and your partner engage in the activities mentioned in each question. Please indicate how often by recording the number in the space to the left of each item.

- 1 = NEVER
 2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
 3 = SOMETIMES
 4 = FREQUENTLY
 5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often:

- ▶ _____ Are you able to clearly identify the specific things about which you disagree?
- ▶ _____ Are you able to identify clearly the specific things about which you do agree?
- ▶ _____ Are you both able to express how the other feels about the issue?
- ▶ _____ Are you both able to express the other's viewpoint nearly as well as you could your own viewpoint?

After you and your partner have been discussing a disagreement over an important issue for a while, how often does your partner's facial expression and tone of voice convey a sense of:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ▶ _____ discouragement (R) | ▶ _____ frustration (R) |
| ▶ _____ anger (R) | ▶ _____ bitterness (R) |
| ▶ _____ disgust (R) | ▶ _____ self-pity (for him/herself) (R) |
| ▶ _____ condescension (R) | ▶ _____ cynicism (R) |
| ▶ _____ resentment (R) | ▶ _____ respect towards you |
| ▶ _____ hostility (R) | |

Note: Items reflect the order of actual presentation of questionnaire.
 (R) indicates item is reverse scored.

Negotiation Subscale of the Kansas Marital Conflict Scale. (KMCS-N)

Once again, please use the following scale and indicate how often you and your partner engage in the activities mentioned in each question. Please indicate how often by recording the number in the space to the left of each item.

- 1 = NEVER
- 2 = ONCE IN A WHILE
- 3 = SOMETIMES
- 4 = FREQUENTLY
- 5 = ALMOST ALWAYS

About the time you and your partner feel you are close to a solution to your disagreement over an important issue, how often:

- ▶ _____ Are you able to completely resolve it with some sort of compromise that is OK with both of you?
- ▶ _____ Do you end up with very little resolved after all? (R)
- ▶ _____ Do you quickly bring the matter to a conclusion that is satisfactory for both of you?
- ▶ _____ Do you realize the matter will have to be reargued in the near future because at least one of you is still basically unhappy with the apparent solution? (R)
- ▶ _____ Do you find that just as you think you have gotten things resolved, your partner comes up with a new idea for resolving the issue? (R)
- ▶ _____ Does your partner keep on trying to propose things that are not mutually acceptable ways of resolving the issue at hand? (R)
- ▶ _____ Does it seem that no matter what you suggest, your partner keeps on finding new, supposedly better solutions? (R)
- ▶ _____ Are you both willing to give and take in order to settle the disagreement?
- ▶ _____ Are you and your partner able to give up some of what you wanted in order to bring the issue to a close?
- ▶ _____ Are you and your partner able to keep coming close together on a mutually acceptable solution until you achieve it?
- ▶ _____ Are you and your partner able to reach a mutually acceptable contract for resolving the disagreement?

Note: Items reflect the order of actual presentation of questionnaire.
(R) indicates item is reverse scored.

INEFFECTIVE ARGUING INVENTORY (IAI)

Below are descriptions of the kinds of arguments partners in relationships are likely to experience. Using the scale (1=Disagree Strongly to 5=Agree Strongly), indicate how much you agree that each statement fits your relationship.

- ▶ _____ By the end of an argument, each of us has been given a fair hearing.(1) (R)
- ▶ _____ When we begin to fight or argue, I think, "Here we go again".(2)
- ▶ _____ Overall, I'd say we're pretty good at solving our problems.(3) (R)
- ▶ _____ Our arguments are left hanging and unresolved.(4)
- ▶ _____ We go for days without settling our differences.(5)
- ▶ _____ Our arguments seem to end in frustrating stalemates.(6)
- ▶ _____ We need to improve the way we settle our differences.(7)
- ▶ _____ Overall, our arguments are brief and quickly forgotten.(8) (R)

Note: Item numbers in bracket reflect item order in actual measure.
(R) indicates item is reverse scored.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES INVENTORY (CRSI)

Instructions: Using the scale (1=Never to 5=Always), rate how frequently you use each of the following styles to deal with arguments or disagreements with your partner.

Conflict Engagement Subscale (CRSI-CENG).

- _____ Launching personal attacks.(1)
- _____ Exploding and getting out of control.(5)
- _____ Getting carried away and saying things that are not meant.(9)
- _____ Throwing insults and digs.(13)

Positive Problem Solving Subscale (CRSI-PPS).

- _____ Focussing on the problem at hand. (2)
- _____ Sitting down and discussing differences constructively. (6)
- _____ Finding alternatives that are acceptable to each of us.(10)
- _____ Negotiating and compromising.(14)

Withdrawal Subscale (CRSI-WDRL).

- _____ Remaining silent for long periods of time.(3)
- _____ Reaching a limit, "shutting down", and refusing to talk any further.(7)
- _____ Tuning the other person out.(11)
- _____ Withdrawing, acting distant and not interested.(15)

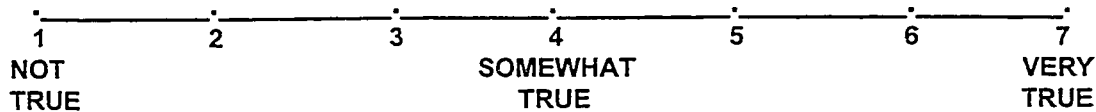
Compliance Subscale (CRSI-COMPL).

- _____ Not being willing to stick up for myself.(4)
- _____ Being too compliant.(8)
- _____ Not defending my position.(12)
- _____ Giving in with little attempt to present my side of the issue.(16)

Note: The numbers in bracket refer to the sequential placement of the items on the CRSI.

**BALANCED INVENTORY OF DESIRABLE RESPONDING:
IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT SUBSCALE (IMS)**

In order to better understand the types of people interested in this study, we would like to know your personal views in relation to a number of behaviors. Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.



- ▶ _____ I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
- ▶ _____ I never cover up my mistakes.
- ▶ _____ There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
- ▶ _____ I never swear.
- ▶ _____ I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
- ▶ _____ I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
- ▶ _____ I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.
- ▶ _____ When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
- ▶ _____ I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
- ▶ _____ I always declare everything at customs.
- ▶ _____ When I was young I sometimes stole things.
- ▶ _____ I have never dropped litter on the streets.
- ▶ _____ I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
- ▶ _____ I never read sexy books or magazines.
- ▶ _____ I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
- ▶ _____ I never take things that don't belong to me.
- ▶ _____ I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
- ▶ _____ I have never damaged a library or store merchandise without reporting it.
- ▶ _____ I have some pretty awful habits.
- ▶ _____ I don't gossip about other people's business.

Note: Items presented reflect the order of actual presentation of questionnaire.

Table B-1

Coefficients of Internal Consistency (Alpha) for Measures.

Measure	Total Sample (<u>N</u> =162)	Women (<u>n</u> =98)	Men (<u>n</u> =64)
KMSS	.94	.94	.93
DAS-SF	.78	.79	.75
ASDSC	.93	.92	.91
ESDS	.96	.97	.96
IAI	.90	.91	.87
KMCS-A	.87	.87	.87
KMCS-D	.92	.92	.91
KMCS-N	.90	.89	.90
CRSI-CENG	.83	.82	.85
CRSI-PPS	.80	.78	.84
CRSI-COMPL	.81	.81	.79
CRSI-WDRL	.81	.81	.80
IM	.77	.78	.74

Note.

ASDSC=Affective Self-Disclosure Scale for Couples. ESDS=Self-Disclosure of Emotion Scale. KMSS=Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. DAS-SF=Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Short Form. IAI=Ineffective Arguing Inventory. KMCS-A=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Agenda Building stage. KMCS-D=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Discussion stage. KMCS-N=Kansas Marital Conflict Scale-Negotiation stage. CRSI-CENG=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Conflict Engagement subscale. CRSI-PPS=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Positive Problem Solving subscale. CRSI-COMPL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Compliance subscale. CRSI-WDRL=Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory-Withdrawal subscale. IM=Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding-Impression Management.

APPENDIX C



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

École de psychologie

School of Psychology

January 23, 1996

Ms. Diana Vito
School of Psychology
University of Ottawa
INTRA

Dear Ms. Vito:

RE: Research Project: "Affective Self-Disclosure, Conflict Resolution, and Marital Quality"

Following a review of your project by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, at a meeting held on January 22, 1996, I am pleased to inform you that your project has received full approval (Category I.A.). Such approval is valid for one year.

We wish you the best in your project.

Sincerely,

Claude Lamontagne, Ph.D.
Chair of the Ethics Committee

CL/jc

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR STUDY

Newspaper Advertisement

We Need Your Help!

Researchers from the University of Ottawa want individuals currently living in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationship for participation in a study investigating characteristics of couple relationships. Participation involves 30 minutes to complete self-report questionnaires mailed to your home. You will receive a summary of the study's results and the chance to **win \$100.00**. For information, call: **Diana Vito**, Ph.D. candidate, 562-5800 (ext. 4460).

Classroom Advertisement

Researchers from the University of Ottawa's School of Psychology are looking for individuals currently in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationships to participate in a study of couple relationships. Participation involves one partner of the couple completing a questionnaire package that will be mailed to their homes. The questionnaire is designed to examine communication between partners and relationship satisfaction and will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete. In return for your participation, you will receive a summary of the study's general findings and your name will be entered in a draw with the chance of **winning \$100.00**.

If you are **interested in participating** in this study, please **call Diana Vito** at 562-5800 (ext. 4460). Participants must be fluent in English and must have been co-habiting with their partner for a minimum of 6 months.

Poster Advertisement

***Understanding Marital
and Common-Law Relationships:
We Need Your Help!!!***

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

We are looking for interested individuals who are:

- ▶ currently in a marital or common-law heterosexual relationship.
- ▶ have been living with their current partner for a minimum of 6 months.
- ▶ are fluent in the English language.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

- ▶ having one partner of the couple complete a questionnaire package that will be mailed to their home.
- ▶ the questionnaire deals with individual views about their relationship and the communication styles partners use in dealing with issues that arise. It will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete.

WHY SHOULD YOU PARTICIPATE?

- ▶ the opportunity to receive a summary of the general findings of the study.
- ▶ your name will be entered in a draw with the chance of **WINNING \$100.00**.
- ▶ the opportunity to help researchers gain a better understanding of marital and common-law relationships.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ▶ For more information, or if you are **interested in participating**, please call:

**Diana Vito, Doctoral student,
School of Psychology
University of Ottawa
tel: 562-5800 (ext. 4460)**

TELEPHONE RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL

First Call

Hello, this is Diana Vito from the University of Ottawa, and I am calling regarding the research project on couple relationships that you expressed an interest in. Thank you for responding to our advertisement. We are conducting a research study designed to investigate characteristics of couples' relationships. This is being conducted by myself, a doctoral student, and supervised by Dr. John Hunsley, a psychology professor at the University of Ottawa, and has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa.

As mentioned in the advertisement, participation involves filling out questionnaires that will be mailed to your home. The questionnaires deal with characteristics of couple relationships such as communication styles and relationship quality and satisfaction. It will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete. You are free to refuse to answer any or all of the questions, but we would greatly appreciate it if you would take some time and answer as many as you can. As well, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. If you do decide to complete all or parts of the questionnaire package, it will be important for this study's success that you complete the questionnaire on your own without discussing your responses with your partner. It is quite common for partners to have different views about their relationship, however, in this study, we are interested in your own perspective and personal views of your relationship. As well, we realize that it is very common for individuals to want to discuss their results with their partners, but we ask that you complete the questionnaire package and send it in before you discuss your answers with your partner.

All of your responses to the questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential. Any presentation of the results of the project will not contain any information identifying individual participants who were involved in the study. To ensure anonymity, please do not place your name on the questionnaire.

If you decide to complete and return the questionnaire, you will have the opportunity to enter your name in a draw and **win \$100.00**. If you would like to enter your name in our draw, and/or receive a summary of the general findings upon completion of this study (by approximately August, 1996), please indicate your name, address and telephone number on the enclosed separate sheet and return this along with your completed questionnaire.

To be eligible to participate in the study, I need to check a few things. First, are you currently in a heterosexual relationship? Second, are you and your partner currently living together? Third, how long have you been living together? Are you fluent in English, as all the questions are in English?

If the respondent meets the criteria: Thank you for your interest in this study. If there are no further questions, the researcher will proceed to collect the individual's name, full address, and inform them that the questionnaire will be delivered within one week.

If the respondent does not meet the criteria: Thank you for your interest in this study, but we are looking for couples who have lived together for at least 6 months and who are fluent in English.

FIRST FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE PROTOCOL

If the participant fails to return the questionnaire package within 3 weeks of mailing, a follow-up call will be initiated by the researcher:

I am calling about the study on couples and intimate relationships being conducted by Diana Vito and Dr. John Hunsley from the University of Ottawa. We contacted you earlier about participating in the study and we have not yet received your questionnaire. Are you still interested in participating in the couple survey and in returning the questionnaire?

If the individual indicates that they are still interested in participating: Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. (the researcher can also respond to any concerns or questions they may have regarding responding to items). When do you think you will get a chance to return it? Thank you once again for your time in completing the questionnaire and sending it back. Your cooperation in this study is much appreciated.

If the individual indicates that they have already sent the questionnaire: Thank you once again for your time in completing the questionnaire and sending it back. Your cooperation in this study is much appreciated.

If the individual indicates that they no longer wish to participate: Thank you for having taken the time to talk to me and for having considered participating in the study.

SECOND FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE PROTOCOL

If the participant fails to return the questionnaire package within 2 weeks of the first follow-up telephone call, a second and final follow-up call will be initiated by the researcher:

I am calling about the study on couples and intimate relationships being conducted by Diana Vito and Dr. John Hunsley from the University of Ottawa. We contacted you 2 weeks ago about participating in the study and we have not yet received your questionnaire. Are you still interested in participating in the couple survey and in returning the questionnaire?

If the individual indicates that they are still interested in participating: Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. (the researcher can also respond to any concerns or questions they may have regarding responding to items). When do you think you will get a chance to return it? Thank you once again for your time in completing the questionnaire and sending it back. Your cooperation in this study is much appreciated. We will not be calling again.

If the individual indicates that they have already sent to questionnaire: Thank you once again for your time in completing the questionnaire and sending it back. Your cooperation in this study is much appreciated.

If the individual indicates that they no longer wish to participate: Thank you for having taken the time to talk to me and for having considered participating in the study.



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School of Psychology

STUDY OF COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS

We appreciate you taking the time to help us with our study to learn more about close relationships. The purpose of this study is for researchers to learn about couples' communication styles. It is being conducted by *Diana Vito*, a doctoral student, and by *Dr. John Hunsley*, an associate professor in the School of Psychology at the *University of Ottawa*.

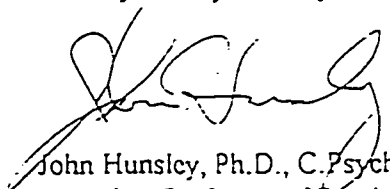
If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will involve the completion of the enclosed questionnaire which asks questions in a number of different areas regarding your relationship with your partner. It will take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete the questionnaire. Some of the questions may not seem relevant to your relationship, or they may seem redundant, however, please answer them the best you can. Although we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing the questionnaire, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to participate. You are free to refuse to answer any or all of the questions, but we would greatly appreciate it if you would take some time and answer as many as you can. As well, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. If you do decide to complete all or parts of the questionnaire, it will be important for this study's success that you complete the questionnaire on your own without discussing the items with your partner. It is very common for couples to have different perspectives about their relationship, however we are interested in your own personal views. Further, if you decide to complete all or parts of the questionnaire, please return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope that has been provided for you.

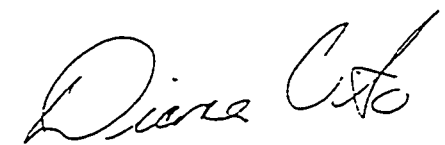
All of your responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Any presentation of the results of the project will not contain any information identifying individual participants who were involved in the study. To ensure anonymity, please do not place your name on the questionnaire.

If you decide to complete and return the questionnaire, you will have the opportunity to enter your name in a draw and *win \$100.00*. If you would like to enter your name in our draw, as well as receive a summary of the general findings upon completion of this study (by approximately October, 1996), please indicate your name, address and telephone number on the enclosed separate form and return it along with your completed questionnaire.

Once again, we appreciate you taking the time to help us with our study. If you have any questions or comments regarding the questionnaire or the study, please contact *Dr. John Hunsley* or *Diana Vito* at 562-5800 (ext. 4460).

Thank you for your cooperation,


John Hunsley, Ph.D., C.Psych.
Associate Professor of Psychology
University of Ottawa


Diana Vito, Doctoral Student
Clinical Psychology
University of Ottawa

FORM FOR SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND DRAW

STUDY OF COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS

If you would like a summary of the study's results and/or your name entered in our draw for \$100.00, check the appropriate box below and write your name, address and telephone number in the space provided:

☐ :I would like a summary of the general findings of the study upon its completion.

☐ :I would like my name entered in a draw for \$100.00.

Name: _____

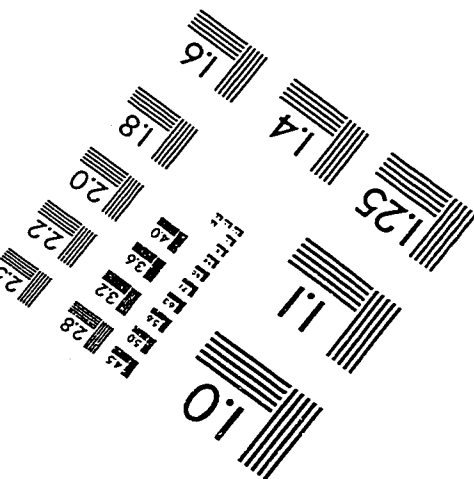
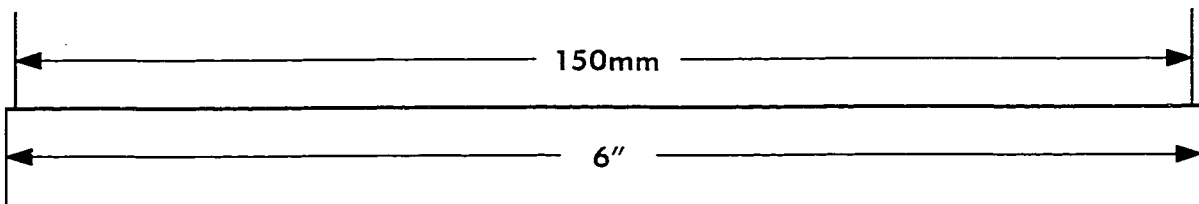
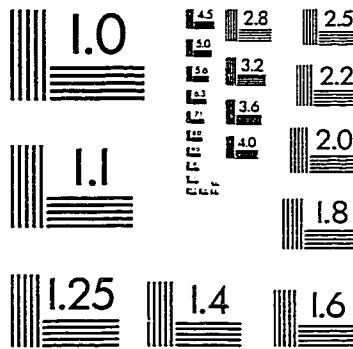
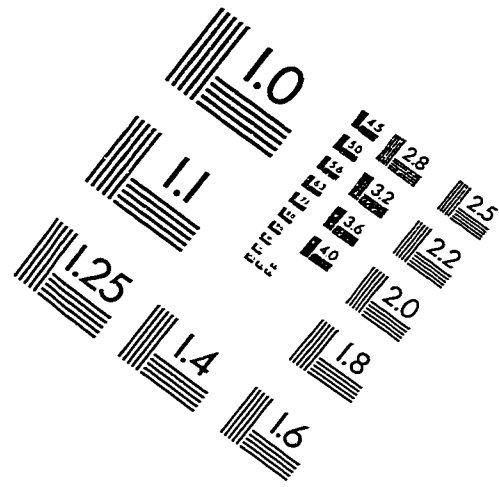
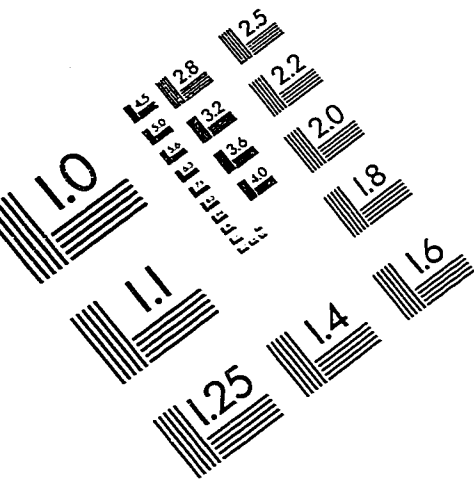
Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

If you have completed this form, place it in the self-addressed stamped envelope that has been provided along with your completed questionnaire.

Once again, thank you for your participation.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

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