Abstract

The present research introduces the construct of Relationship Status Disclosure, an individual difference variable that assesses the extent to which people are willing to disclose and discuss their relationship status with other people. In Studies 1A and 1B I developed and validated the Relationship Status Disclosure Index. In Study Two I examined whether Relationship Status Disclosure could predict how often a sample of dating participants mentioned their romantic partners during an instant messaging “Getting to Know You” task (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011). In Study Three I examined the predictive validity of Relationship Status Disclosure for single and dating participants’ behaviour on Facebook. Across these studies, I found that Relationship Status Disclosure is a construct that was reliably measured, and demonstrated convergent validity with general self-disclosure and divergent validity with relationship satisfaction and commitment. Relationship Status Disclosure also predicted the frequency of partner mentions (Study Two) and differentially predicted the content of Facebook status updates, posts, and photos, for single and dating samples (Study Three). Taken together, the present research suggests that Relationship Status Disclosure is a promising new construct for understanding how individuals navigate their relationship status within a broader social context and future directions for research are discussed.
Acknowledgments

To begin, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Tara MacDonald, for her guidance, support, and patience with me for the last few years. You have been invaluable to me as a mentor with your research expertise and positive attitude. I honestly do not think I would have accomplished this had you not been my supervisor, mentor, cheerleader, and friend throughout this entire process. I cannot express how much I appreciate the very important role you played in my life while I was at Queen’s. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Lee Fabrigar and Dr. Wendy Craig, for their valuable insights and unique perspectives on my research project. I also need to acknowledge my research assistants, Morgan Sherrer, Rebecca Viner, and Emily Britton, for their many hours spent recruiting participants, collecting data, entering data, and coding data. Studies two and three would not have been possible without all of you!

To my University of Winnipeg undergraduate psycho cohort who also continued their studies at Queen’s or elsewhere in Ontario, thank you for bringing home to Ontario. To the floor 15 crew of John Orr Tower who joined our psycho family, thank you for being a part of the elaborate Canadian Living inspired holiday family dinners, our lengthy discussions of reciprocity, and for contributing to the graduate school version of Cards Against Humanity. Without this motley crew of misfits, the last few years would not have had nearly enough laughter, music, or costumes.

My partner Tynan has also been overwhelmingly patient while I completed my studies far away. You were a very important reminder that life existed outside of graduate school, a fact I often forgot or insisted I did not have time for, so thank you for mitigating my neuroticism and sticking around. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for providing a safety net as I balanced myself across the tightrope of graduate studies, I may have stumbled a bit but I finally made it to the other side!
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Imagine two undergraduate students, Adam and Hannah, who have been dating for three weeks. Adam and Hannah are equally happy, satisfied, and excited with their budding romantic relationship. They spend as much time together as their schedules allow and on days they cannot see each other, they use text messaging and Facebook to maintain contact with one another. On their last date, while discussing how to balance the new demands of university while still maintaining a social life, it was casually revealed that neither Adam nor Hannah was dating anyone else. The next day, while Hannah is updating her education information on Facebook to include her newly chosen major, she takes the opportunity to update her relationship status to indicate that she is in a relationship with Adam. When Adam logs into Facebook that evening, he is unsure of how to respond to Hannah's relationship request, he decides to queue the request and logs out. Adam is just as happy to be dating Hannah as Hannah is to be dating Adam. Nevertheless, Adam is more reluctant to disclose his relationship information to his social network than Hannah is, why might this be? While people have always had the opportunity to share their relationship status with their close friends and family, in the age of social networking sites like Facebook, disclosing a relationship status is now an explicit choice. With over a billion Facebook users (a number that continues to rise), more than one in six people on our planet have made the conscious decision to tell the world or not, if they are single, married, in a relationship, or 'it's complicated'.

The extant literature on relationship disclosure has focused on the relationship level of disclosure by distinguishing between relationships that are secret from relationships that are not secret. However, as illustrated by Hannah and Adam, even nonsecret relationships face the dilemmas of if, when and to whom, they should be disclosed. Hannah and Adam also demonstrate how within one relationship, there are two independent sources of relationship disclosure. Ultimately, these individual
tendencies will interact to determine if, when and to whom, the relationship will be disclosed. My master's thesis investigated individual variability in Relationship Status Disclosure, defined as the extent to which people are willing and open to disclosing and discussing their relationship status with other people. My research differed from previous research on relationship disclosure in two fundamental ways. First, rather than approach the topic of relationship disclosure at the level of the relationship, I adopted an individual approach to the study of relationship disclosure. I investigated how individual tendencies of relationship status disclosure related to relationship satisfaction and commitment, as well as, general self-disclosure. Second, in my study of Relationship Status Disclosure, I also investigated how singles navigate the dilemma of deciding whether or not to disclose their status and how they disclose their relationship status. In sum, my thesis focused on two interpersonal dimensions, a relationship status dimension (in a relationship vs. single) and a disclosure dimension (measured continuously). While Relationship Status Disclosure was measured continuously, these dimensions hypothetically intersect to produce four quadrants that represent populations of people: high relationship disclosers, low relationship disclosers, high single disclosers, and low single disclosers. To facilitate my literature review, these quadrants provide structure to an otherwise disparate literature.

**Relationship Disclosers**

The limited extant literature on relationship disclosure suggests that the decision to disclose a relationship to others is a fundamental dilemma for romantic relationships (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993; Goldsmith & Parks, 1990). On the positive end of the spectrum, disclosing a romantic relationship reaps the benefits of social recognition and support; greater family and friend approval is associated with increased relationship stability and satisfaction over time (Eggert & Parks, 1987). Furthermore, within friendships and families, parties are expected to disclose details of their lives and in the absence of disclosure, these friendships and family ties can suffer (Altman & Taylor, 1973).
As mentioned previously, disclosing a relationship to friends, family, and your third-grade neighbour, has been expedited with the advent of Facebook. With the single click of a button, you can announce you are in relationship and with whom, a relationship behaviour colloquially known as being “Facebook official” (FBO); (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller, 2013). Fox and Warber (2013) investigated the meaning and perceptions of going FBO amongst undergraduates. The authors uncovered that the meaning of going FBO had a three-factor structure, these factors were titled commitment, intensity, and social response; and they found expected gender differences in how strongly men and women endorsed the meaning of being “Facebook official”. Women were more likely than men to endorse that going FBO indicated exclusivity (commitment), a serious step in the relationship that indicated long-term stability (intensity), and that going FBO garnered attention online and offline (social response). However, men and women did not differ in the interpersonal and social motives for going FBO, such as expressing commitment to their partner, wanting attention, and stating their partner is taken. Gender differences in the perceived meaning of – but not motives for – going FBO, may explain why women, but not men, report higher relationship satisfaction when their partners indicate being partnered on Facebook (Papp, Danielewicz, & Cayemberg, 2012).

Interestingly, there is some evidence that network reactions to going FBO are not equal for men and women. College men who go FBO are more likely than women to elicit negative feedback from their male friends, conversely, college women, relative to men, receive more positive feedback from their social networks after going FBO (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller, 2013). The authors suggest these reactions are elicited by sex role expectations. Men likely receive negative feedback after going FBO because this is a violation of the expectation that young males should seek multiple mates, women likely receive positive feedback because going FBO confirms the expectation that young women should desire committed relationships.

Prior to the advent of social networking sites, Baxter and Widenmann (1993) investigated
undergraduates’ reasons and justifications for disclosing their romantic relationships. The most frequent justification was the perception that the target of disclosure expected to know about their romantic relationship. Some other justifications for disclosing a relationship were self-focused; these included enjoying the act of disclosure and desiring psychological support from the target of disclosure. Undergraduates also revealed partner-focused justifications for disclosing their relationships, such as believing that disclosure to a target would result in a desirable outcome with the romantic partner, or perceiving that disclosure was expected by the romantic partner. Other justifications for relationship disclosure were target-focused, these included the perception that disclosure would assist the target in some way, and desiring to affect the relationship with the target (for example, Hannah could be disclosing her relationship in an attempt to thwart advances from other potential suitors in her social network).

**Relationship Nondisclosers**

Thus far, the literature reviewed highlights some of the processes potentially influencing Hannah’s proclivity to disclose her relationship. Next, I turn to the related literature that highlights some of the processes that are potentially influencing Adam’s reluctance to disclose the same relationship. Some research has suggested that disclosing a relationship can violate the boundary of privacy between the couple and outside parties (Krain, 1977). Moreover, taking a relationship public often indicates a turning point within the relationship and could undermine its stability if partners have not agreed upon or discussed exclusivity (Baxter & Bullis, 1986).

While the literature suggests that disclosing a relationship is normative, relationship concealment is also common and typically occurs in the early stages of a relationship (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993) or in marginalized relationships, such as homosexual, interracial, partners with large age gaps between them, and inter-religious relationships (Lehmiller, 2009). Furthermore, romantic secrecy depends on the target; romantic relationships are most likely to be concealed from
parents and more likely to be revealed to close friends (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993).

In addition to anticipating negative reactions from targets of disclosure and perceiving that disclosure would violate the romantic relationship's rules for privacy, Baxter and Widenham (1993) uncovered a few other frequent justifications for undergraduates concealing a relationship. Justifications for concealing a relationship were primarily target-focused, such as perceiving that disclosure violated the expectations of the relationship with the target, anticipating damage to the relationship with the target, and anticipating harm to the target through disclosure. To illustrate how concealing a relationship can prevent harm to a target of disclosure, perhaps Adam has a recent ex-partner on his Facebook and he wants to avoid hurting her feelings with the revelation he has moved on to a new relationship. Finally, one partner-focused justification for the concealing of a relationship was the anticipation that disclosure would negatively affect the romantic relationship, and the only common self-focused justification was the fear of losing control of the relationship information to gossip.

Some research on relationship disclosure has also suggested that secret relationships are particularly alluring and passionate (e.g., Lane & Wegner, 1994; Wegner, Lane, & Dimitri, 1994) so maybe Adam gets a thrill from keeping his relationship with Hannah a secret. There is some evidence that people think more about past relationships that had been kept secret compared to relationships that they had disclosed, furthermore, secret relationships are recalled as 'hotter' than disclosed relationships. More so than disclosed relationships, secret relationships remain a frequent target of obsessive preoccupation, this is true despite the fact that relationship secrecy does not affect the regret of relationship dissolution or the ability to get over the relationship (Wegner, Lane, & Dimitri, 1994). There is also scant experimental evidence for a causal link from secrecy to attraction. In a lab paradigm, mixed-sex pairs who secretly communicated via foot touching during a card game against another mixed-sex pair, reported being more attracted to one another after the game compared to pairs who openly communicated through foot touching and pairs who did not touch or know about a secret.
This finding suggests a casual path from sharing a secret to attraction, at least for new acquaintances (Wegner, Lane & Dimitri, 1994).

Conversely, more recent research investigating secrecy in ongoing relationships suggests that greater secrecy surrounding a relationship is actually associated with lower relationship quality (Foster & Campbell, 2005). Compared to disclosed relationships, having a current, secret romantic relationship was associated with lower levels of love and physical attractiveness, decreases in relationship quality over a two week period, less satisfaction, more breakup distress, and increases in relationship burden. Interestingly, and counter to hypotheses, relationship length did not mediate the association between greater romantic secrecy and decreased relationship quality (Foster, Foster, & Campbell, 2010). New and old relationships alike, relationship secrecy was associated with poor relationship quality, even after excluding participants who maintained relationship secrecy to pursue other partners or linked secrecy to problematic factors about the relationship. Relationship secrecy is also associated with reduced commitment by negatively affecting relationship closeness (Lehmiller, 2009). Furthermore, relationship secrecy not only negatively affects relationship outcomes, it also affects personal outcomes; romantic secrecy predicted lower self-esteem and poorer mental and physical health (Lehmiller, 2009).

**Single Nondisclosers**

On the secrecy dimension of disclosure but on the single dimension of relationships, the disclosure of being single could be avoided because chronic singleness can be considered deviant and stigmatized (Byrne, 2009). DePaulo and Morris refer to the stigmatization of singles as 'singlism'; while they acknowledge that the stereotyping and discrimination of singles is softer than that experienced by racial or sexual minorities, their research suggests the danger of 'singlism' is insidious as it often goes unrecognized and when singlism is pointed out, people perceive it as legitimate (2006).

In terms of stereotyping, undergraduates are much more likely to describe a single person as
immature, insecure, self-centred, unhappy, lonely, and ugly than they are a married person. Singles were only described as caring, kind and giving 2% of the time, whereas married people were described as such almost 50% of the time, furthermore, both undergraduates and community members derogate singles more when targets are 40 years old compared to 25 years old. Bolstering the explanation that coupling is glorified more than singleness, character perceptions of singles were mediated by relationship history; singles described as having had a previous relationship were perceived as more socially mature, less self-centred and better-adjusted than singles without a relationship history (Morris, DePaulo, Hertel, & Ritter, 2006).

These stereotypes may affect the treatment of singles in society. Byrne and Carr (2005) found that chronic singles are more likely than married people to report receiving poorer service in restaurants and condescending attitudes in everyday life. Their sample was nationally representative and the analyses controlled for factors such as age, race, sexual orientation, and health, suggesting these interpersonal differences were most likely accounted for by the single-married dimension.

Because of these negative character perceptions, singles can be reluctant to disclose their singleness in order to avoid being labelled as immature, self-centred, and unhappy, particularly as they get older and the stigma of being unattached grows. Single people might avoid contexts that highlight their singleness, like attending certain events, participating in certain conversations, and disclosing their relationship status on Facebook, and these tendencies might by moderated by age.

Single Disclosers

Despite the stigma associated with chronic singleness, in terms of partner or mate seeking, it is beneficial to advertise oneself as available. The fear of being single may motivate people to disclose their single status in an effort to meet someone and transition into a romantic relationship. Disclosing oneself as single may signal that you are actively pursuing relationship possibilities or that you are open to the idea of dating, it could also signal that you are available for casual hook ups. In one study,
disclosing oneself as “Single” on Facebook was rated as the top method for eliciting contact from potential partners (Young, Dutta, & Dommety, 2009). Interestingly, people who fear a chronic single status may be most likely to find a romantic relationship because the fear of being single predicts settling for less in romantic relationships (Spielmann et al., in press). Specifically, the fear of being single predicted being less discriminatory in mate selection and maintaining dissatisfying relationships in order to avoid being single.

In addition to motivations to alter a single status or enjoy the benefits of a single status, being single can also be a salient and important social identity that is maintained by choice (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). Disclosing singleness may arise simply because it is a salient component of some people's identities similar to being a student at Queen's or a musician.

The Current Research

Despite a considerable body of research on relationship disclosure and its effects on relationship function and health, all research to date has examined relationship disclosure as a function of the relationship (e.g., disclosed vs. nondisclosed relationships) not as a function of the individual. This has not only led to the oversight of singles in the relationship disclosure literature (and the implicit assumption that only people in a relationship have something to disclose or not disclose) but also to the lack of measuring individual differences that may affect relationship disclosure. In this thesis, I investigated the behaviours and correlates of individuals' voluntary disclosure of romantic relationship status, such as indicating a relationship status on Facebook, or the spontaneous reference to a partner – or lack of partner – in conversation. To my knowledge, no prior research has conceptualized Relationship Status Disclosure, the extent to which people disclose and discuss their relationship status with other people, as an individual difference that applies to the romantically unattached as well as the attached.

My conceptualization of Relationship Status Disclosure is one of an enduring tendency to
disclose relationship status information, a trait that accompanies each individual throughout their romantic escapades, from being single to the beginning of relationships, from the progression of relationships through to the dissolution of relationships. I hypothesize that people vary in the extent to which they are open to disclosing their relationship status and that differences in Relationship Status Disclosure are more closely associated to the disclosure dimension than the relationship dimension. Thus, I designed a new scale to measure the construct of Relationship Status Disclosure that is independent of relationship status and captures fluctuations in relationship status. I also predicted that Relationship Status Disclosure, while related to general self-disclosure, would be fundamentally distinct from general self-disclosure and uniquely related to a host of interpersonal variables, such as relational interdependent self-construal, relationship specific identification, public and private self-consciousness, and self-consciousness. General self-disclosure captures people's willingness to disclose personal information about one's self, such as their deepest feelings and things they feel guilty about. Conversely, Relationship Status Disclosure captures people willingness to discuss their partners or lack of one, and their transitions between relationship statuses. The two constructs refer to the same disclosure behaviour but Relationship Status Disclosure refers to a more refined set of personal relationship information that is colloquially considered less private than either personal guilt or deep feelings.

My index also captures disclosing information about another person (a romantic partner) in addition to the self. The General Self-Disclosure Index (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983) only contains one item out of ten that references close relationships with other people. Moreover, the Relationship Status Disclosure Index (RSDI) differs further from the general self-disclosure index in that it assesses respondents’ deliberate omissions of information in addition to their willingness to disclose. The RSDI also contains items assessing respondents’ attitudes on whether or not their partner should disclose relationship status information. As a domain-specific disclosure measure with many novel features, the
predictive utility of the RSDI will provide novel insight into relationship functioning that differences in
general self-disclosure do not capture. I expect Relationship Status Disclosure to correlate with general
self-disclosure but illustrate divergent validity in its predictive utility for interpersonal variables.
Finally, given known gender differences in general self-disclosure (Bond, 2009; Grigsby & Weatherley,
1983), I hypothesize that on average, women will score higher than men will on Relationship Status
Disclosure.

In addition to assessing the converging and discriminant validity of the RSD Index, I extend my
research by investigating the predictive utility of the measure by assessing participant behaviour in the
lab and on Facebook. To summarize, the purpose of my thesis is to introduce the construct of
Relationship Status Disclosure as an individual difference variable and to create and validate the
Relationship Status Disclosure Index. Understanding what Relationship Status Disclosure means at the
individual level, as well as understanding the utility of the measure, will further the scientific
understanding of romantic relationships by contributing to the literature on how individuals navigate
their intimate relationships within a broader social context.
Chapter 2

Study 1A

The purpose of Study 1A was to administer the Relationship Status Disclosure Index to a large sample and examine its reliability and underlying factor structure.

Method

Participants

1031 (Female = 828, Male = 203\(^1\)) students enrolled in Psyc100 at Queen’s University (\(M_{\text{age}} = 18.13, SD = 1.25\)) participated in this study as part of departmental prescreening, administered to the Introductory Psychology class at the beginning of the academic year.

Procedure

Participants completed a battery of measures for departmental prescreening, embedded within these measures was the Relationship Status Disclosure Index. Participants completed this scale along with several measures unrelated to the current research. Participants did not receive compensation for their participation in departmental prescreening. Six months later, a subset of these participants (\(N = 54\)) completed the Relationship Status Disclosure Index for a second time.

Materials

Relationship Status Disclosure Index. The RSDI (Appendix A) is a 21-item measure that was created for the purpose of the current research that assesses individual differences in the willingness to disclose and discuss relationship status. Participants indicated their agreement to each item on a 7-point Likert scale with endpoints 1 (“disagree completely”) and 5 (“agree completely”). Sample items include: “I avoid labels like boyfriend or girlfriend when I am referring to my romantic partner in conversation”;

\[\text{Males} (M = 4.15, SD = .84) \text{ and females} (M = 4.12, SD = .79) \text{ did not differ in Relationship Status Disclosure, } t(1025) = -.43, p = .67.\]
“I update and share my relationship status to my online networks”; and “I think I am quite open in terms of sharing information about my romantic relationships”.

Results and Discussion

Assumption Testing

Prior to investigating the reliability and underlying factor structure of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index, the distribution of mean scores on the 21 item index was investigated for normality. The Shapiro-Wilk test was nonsignificant, $W(1065) = .997, p = .09$; and the standardized skewness ($z = -0.72$) and kurtosis ($z = 1.83$) were also nonsignificant, indicating that the distribution of observed scores did not significantly differ from a normal distribution. Furthermore, visual inspection of the Q-Q plot (see Figure 1) and histogram (See Figure 2) of RSD scores also indicated that the RSD scores were normally distributed.

![Figure 1. Normal Q-Q plot of Relationship Status Disclosure scores.](image-url)
Exploratory Factor Analysis

To understand the underlying structure of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .79$), I conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the 21-item scale to identify latent constructs and allow for estimates of measurement error in the analysis. The initial scree test of the eigenvalues from the reduced matrix suggested a one factor solution (Figure 3) as the eigenvalues substantially “leveled off” after the first factor.

A parallel analysis generating 100 random data sets of 21 variables based on 1031 observations indicated that the obtained eigenvalues of 6 factors were greater than the ninety-fifth percentile value of random data eigenvalues (see Table 1). The more stringent criteria of ninety-fifth percentile eigenvalues was selected over the mean eigenvalues criteria because parallel analysis has been shown to overfactor a scale due to its use of a very lenient standard of what constitutes a major factor (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012). Furthermore, while 6 obtained eigenvalues numerically exceeded the randomly obtained ninety-fifth percentile eigenvalues, only 3 of the obtained eigenvalues were at least twice the size of the randomly obtained eigenvalues and interpreted as real differences. The results of
the parallel analysis in conjunction with the scree plot analysis, suggested possible solutions of one, two, or three factors. The initial eigenvalues showed that the first factor explained 26% of the variance, the second factor 9% of the variance, and the third factor 8% of the variance. To assess and compare these different factor solutions in their model fit, three maximum likelihood model exploratory factor analyses were conducted; for models with more than one factor, a direct quartimin oblique rotation was applied to permit for correlations between factors.

For the goodness of fit of the one-factor solution, $\chi^2(189) = 1585.58, p < .001$, RMSEA = .08, 90% CI [.076, .093]. For the goodness of fit of the two-factor solution, $\chi^2(169) = 1009.64, p < .001$, RMSEA = .07, 90% CI [.062, .077]; and for the goodness of fit of the three-factor solution, $\chi^2(150) = 536.54, p < .001$, RMSEA = .05, 90% CI [.044, .056]. The one-factor solution explained 22% of the variance, the two factor solution explained 27% of the variance and the three-factor solution explained 32% of the variance.
Table 1
Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Random Data Eigenvalues from Parallel Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Random Data Eigenvalue (95%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.556</td>
<td>.322647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.022</td>
<td>.268153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.234996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>.199553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.166616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.144033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.119285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.091146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.073045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.051572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.026957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.009513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>-.012844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>-.034763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>-.052524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>-.167</td>
<td>-.073663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>-.178</td>
<td>-.092518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>-.192</td>
<td>-.115640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>-.213</td>
<td>-.136915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>-.231</td>
<td>-.162864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>-.247</td>
<td>-.188767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compare the models, chi-square difference tests were conducted and indicated that the three-factor solution fit the data better than both the one factor solution, $\chi^2(20) = 1049.04, p < .001$; and the two factor solution, $\chi^2(19) = 473.10, p < .001$. Although the chi-square assessment of model fit indicated less than perfect fit for all three models (all $ps < .001$), with large sample sizes (e.g., 400 or more), almost any difference between the model and the actual data is statistically significant (Kenny,
The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) avoids this sample size issue by scaling the obtained chi-square with the sample size. According to Kline (2005), “RMSEA ≤ .05 indicates close approximate fit, values between .05 and .08 suggest reasonable error of approximation, and RMSEA ≥ .10 suggests poor fit” (p. 139), by this criteria, the three-factor model had close approximate fit and the one- and two-factor solutions had reasonable errors of approximation. Moreover, the 90% confidence intervals indicated some improvement (.005) in precision of estimate with the three-factor solution.

When examining the three-factor solution, a total of six items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure and loaded equally on more than one factor. Items with a factor loading on one factor that were not at least twice the size of the factor loading on another factor were eliminated. The items “I let people know when I have a romantic interest – or crush on – someone”; “I update and share my relationship status to my online networks”; and “I tell people about my romantic relationships even when they are casual”, all loaded equally on factors one and three. The items “My close friends and family know when I am single and they know when I am seeing someone” and “I only tell people I am in a relationship if they ask me directly”, both loaded equally on factors two and three. Finally, the item “I think I am quite open in terms of sharing information about my romantic relationships” loaded equally on all three factors.

After item eliminations, factor one was comprised of five items that assessed participants’ attitudes toward relationship disclosure and was labelled Attitude. Factor two was comprised of six items that assessed participants’ tendencies to conceal their relationship status and was labelled Conceal. Finally, factor three was comprised of four items that assessed participants’ tendencies to disclose their relationship status and was labelled Reveal. These three factors explained 33% of the variance and were moderately correlated with one another, Attitude and Conceal, $r = .32$; Attitude and Reveal, $r = .35$; and Conceal and Reveal, $r = .41$. All items had primary factor loadings over .25 (see
Table 2). Internal consistency of the three subscales was examined using Cronbach’s alpha. The reliability coefficients were moderate for Attitude, \( \alpha = .66 \); Conceal, \( \alpha = .73 \); and Reveal, \( \alpha = .65 \).

In deciding which factor structure to retain for the Relationship Status Disclosure Index, the results of parallel analysis, the scree plot analysis, change statistics, RMSEA goodness-of-fit indices, and reliability analyses were all considered in conjunction with one another. The parallel analysis suggested a three-factor solution, which did fit the data better than the one-factor or two-factor solution as assessed by the chi-square difference tests. This three-factor solution also had closer approximate fit as assessed by the RMSEA, however, it has been established that the RMSEA statistic decreases as a function of model size (Breivik & Olsson, 2001; Kenny & McCoach, 2003); furthermore, criteria for the importance of shifts in RMSEA have not yet been well established in the literature. It has been suggested that a meaningful shift in RMSEA is an improvement in fit by .02, with a marginal notable shift in magnitude being .01 (Fabrigar, Personal Communication, July 21, 2014). The improvement in RMSEA from the one-factor model to the three-factor solution (.08 - .05 = .03) did exceed this criteria. However, reliability analyses indicated that the three subscales derived from the three-factor solution were all less reliable than all 21 items together (Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .85 \)), and the scree plot clearly indicated a one-factor solution (the eigenvalues “levelled off” on the plot after 1 factor). Furthermore, in addition to modest reliability, the subscales each contained a small number of items, and as such, would benefit from the construction of additional items and further scale refinement to more accurately assess the three RSD factors. Therefore, the only clear advantage of the three-factor model over the one-factor model was its explanatory utility to account for the structure of inter-item correlations better than the one-factor model. Preliminary analyses conducted with the subscales rather than the entire scale indicated that conceptually, results did not differ based on the factor structure of the scale used. Thus, in this initial investigation of Relationship Status Disclosure, in favour of parsimony and interpretability, the one-factor model of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index was retained and used.
Table 2
Factor Loadings and Communalities Based on a Maximum Likelihood Model Factor Analysis with Direct Quarterminin Oblique Rotation for 15 Items from the Relationship Status Disclosure Index (RSDI) (N = 1031)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Conceal</th>
<th>Reveal</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would describe myself as a private person when it comes to telling others about my romantic relationships (R)</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I typically don’t want to talk about my romantic relationships with people I don’t know very well (R)</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer that my partner did not share information about our relationship with others</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is best not to be too disclosing about your own romantic relationship (R)</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wait until the relationship is serious before telling people I am in a romantic relationship (R)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid labels like boyfriend or girlfriend when I am referring to my romantic partner in conversation (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I selectively omit details in conversation that would suggest I am in a relationship (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I notify people of my romantic relationship only after my partner has (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.53</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am in a relationship, I misrepresent myself as single to most people (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.53</td>
<td></td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only close friends and family know when I am in a relationship (R)</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My romantic partner and I avoid being affectionate in front of people who do not know we are a couple (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When in a relationship, I think it’s important to let everyone else know that you are with someone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be upset if my partner did not let others know that we are a couple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am in a new relationship, I want everyone to know and share in my happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I notify people when my romantic relationships end</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Factor loadings < .2 are not presented*
in all analyses presented below. For readers interested in the effects of the three subscales derived from the three-factor solution, the results of subscale analyses are presented in Appendices T, U and V, for studies 1B, 2, and 3, respectively.

Test-Retest Reliability

To investigate the test-retest reliability of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index, a subset of participants recompleted the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$) approximately seven months later and these scores were correlated with the scores from prescreening. The results of this analysis demonstrated that the test-retest reliability of the scale was acceptable, $r(54) = .76$, $p < .001$. 
Chapter 3

Study 1B

The purpose of Study 1B was to measure Relationship Status Disclosure and investigate the convergent and divergent validity of the construct by assessing how Relationship Status Disclosure related to general self-disclosure and relationship constructs. I predicted that romantic Relationship Status Disclosure would correlate positively with general self-disclosure; however, the correlation would not be high enough to suggest an overlapping construct since the Relationship Status Disclosure Index was designed to tap into a unique facet of disclosure. I further hypothesized that for participants currently in a relationship, Relationship Status Disclosure would be positively related to relationship variables, specifically, commitment and relationship-specific identification. Commitment captures the intent to maintain a relationship and strong psychological attachment to another person (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). Relationship-specific identification captures the extent to which one’s current romantic relationship and partner have been incorporated into a one’s sense of identity (Lydon & Linardatos, 2011). The tendency to discuss one’s relationship status with other people is likely exacerbated by high commitment to the relationship and high identification with one’s partner.

Method

Participants

Participants were 90 (73 Female, 15 Male, 2 Unknown) undergraduate students at Queen's University who were either enrolled in Psyc100 or part of the nonpsychology subject pool. The nonpsychology pool consists mainly of second- and third-year undergraduates who participate in psychological studies for monetary compensation. Participants received either partial course credit or $5 in return for their participation. Approximately half (51%) of participants were currently in a romantic relationship with the remaining 49% indicating they were single. The majority (81%) of participants indicated they were exclusively heterosexual.
Procedure

Participants were informed that the purpose of the research was to investigate undergraduates' social relationships. Participants completed a battery of dependent measures, including the Relationship Status Disclosure Index to examine the construct of Relationship Status Disclosure and its convergent and divergent validity in relation to other constructs. Participants also responded to various demographic items. After responding to all questionnaires, participants received a debrief form, and their research credit. At the conclusion of data collection, participant responses were matched to their responses from prescreening (e.g., attachment style and self-esteem) through the use of an identification number.

Materials

Self-Consciousness Scale. The SCS (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975; Appendix C) is a 23 item measure that assesses individual differences in public (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$) and private (Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$) self-consciousness as well as social anxiety (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). Private self-consciousness refers to the tendency to attend to hidden, private aspects of the self (e.g., beliefs and values) whereas public self-consciousness refers to attend to overt, public aspects of the self (e.g., behaviour and mannerisms). Participants indicate the extent to which each item describes them on a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints 0 (“extremely uncharacteristic”) and 4 (“extremely characteristic”). Sample items include: “I’m always trying to figure myself out”; “I get embarrassed very easily”; and “I reflect about myself a lot”.

Self-Disclosure Index. The SDI (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983, Appendix D) is a 10-item measure (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$) that assesses participants’ willingness to disclose ten topics to a friend on a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints 0 (“discuss not at all”) and 4 (“discuss fully and completely”). Sample items include: “my deepest feelings”; “my worst fears”; and “what is important to me in life”.

Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale. The RISCS (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000, Appendix
E) is an 11 item measure (Cronbach's α = .83) that assesses the extent to which people include their relationships into their self-concept. Participants rate the extent of their agreement to each item on a 7-point scale with endpoints 1 ("strongly disagree") and 7 ("strongly agree"). Sample items include: “My close relationships are an important reflection of who I am”; “When I think of myself, I often think of my close friends and family also”; and “When I establish a close friendship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person”.

Assessment of Relationship Commitment Scale. The ARCS (Gagné & Lydon, 2003; Appendix F) is a 12-item measure that assesses current commitment (Cronbach's α = .93) and satisfaction (Cronbach's α = .89) with a romantic relationship. Participants rate the extent of their agreement with each item on a 9-point Likert scale with endpoints 1 ("not at all") and 9 ("absolutely"). Sample items include: “To what extent do you feel enthusiastic about your relationship?”; “To what extent would it be a relief to not be in the relationship right now?” and “To what extent do you feel dedicated to your relationship?”.

Relationship-Specific Identification Scale. The RSIS (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011; Appendix G) is an 11-item adaptation of the Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000) that assesses the extent to which participants include their romantic partner into their self-concept (Cronbach's α = .93). Participants rate the extent of their agreement to each item on a 7-point scale with endpoints 1 ("strongly disagree") and 7 ("strongly agree"). Sample items include: “My current romantic relationship is an important reflection of who I am”; “When I think of myself, I often think of my partner also”; and “When I establish a romantic relationship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person”.

Attachment Orientations. The Experiences in Close Relationship Scale - Revised (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Appendix H) is a 36-item scale that measures the anxiety (Cronbach α = .91) and avoidance (Cronbach α = .91) dimensions on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). A sample anxiety item is, “I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with
“me” and a sample avoidant item is, “I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners”.

Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item measure (Cronbach α = .91) that assesses self-esteem on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 7 (Strongly Agree). Sample items include “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”, and “I take a positive attitude toward myself”.

Results

Inter-scale correlations for all participants are presented in Table 3 and scale descriptives are presented in Table 4. As predicted, Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) was moderately and positively related to general self-disclosure, \( r(88) = .29, p < .01 \). RSD was negatively correlated with private self-consciousness, \( r(88) = -.22, p = .04 \), and social anxiety, \( r(88) = -.28, p < .01 \), but unrelated to public self-consciousness, \( r(88) = -.17, p > .10 \), and marginally related to self-esteem, \( r(83) = .20, p = .07 \).

As predicted, RSD was strongly and negatively correlated with attachment avoidance, \( r(84) = -.41, p < .001 \). Surprisingly, RSD was also strongly and negatively correlated with attachment anxiety, \( r(84) = -.39, p < .001 \). To probe the association between Relationship Status Disclosure and Attachment Anxiety further, data were grouped by relationship status and reanalyzed (see Tables 5 and 6). For participants currently in a relationship, Attachment Anxiety was unrelated to RSD, \( r(42) = -.18, p = .25 \), however, for single participants, Relationship Status Disclosure was strongly and negatively correlated with Attachment Anxiety, \( r(40) = -.42, p = .006 \). However, the correlations between RSD and attachment anxiety did not significantly differ for dating and single participants, \( z = -.72, p = .47 \).

The relationship between RSD and self-esteem was marginally stronger for dating participants \( (r(44) = .38, p = .01) \) than for single participants \( (r(41) = .02, p = .93), z = -1.69, p = .09 \), suggesting that disclosing one’s relationship status and feeling positively towards oneself is more closely related for people currently involved in a romantic relationship than for people currently unattached.

23
Table 3
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Index Inter-Scale Correlations (N = 90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dating Status</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-.66**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>-.58**</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Social Anxiety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relational Self-Construal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for All Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status Disclosure</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Self-Construal</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Specific Identification</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>7.850</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Intercorrelations for Single Participants (n = 44)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>.32*</td>
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<td>5. Self-Esteem</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-.36*</td>
<td>-.59**</td>
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<td>6. Private Self-Consciousness</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>.31*</td>
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<td>7. Public Self-Consciousness</td>
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<td>9. Relational Self-Construal</td>
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Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Table 6
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Intercorrelations for Dating Participants (n = 46)

<table>
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<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
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<td>.44**</td>
<td>.06</td>
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<td>8. Social Anxiety</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.11</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>.49**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
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<td>10. Relationship Specific Identification</td>
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<td>12. Commitment</td>
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Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
A regression analysis indicated that dating status significantly predicted RSD, $\beta = .27$, $t(88) = 2.72$, $p = .01$; specifically, participants in a relationship ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .47$) were more disclosing of their relationship status than single participants were ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .52$). General self-disclosure, $\beta = .25$, $t(88) = 1.62$, $p = .11$; and the relationship status by general self-disclosure interaction term, $\beta = .01$, $t(88) = .03$, $p = .97$ did not significantly predict RSD.

**Study 1B Discussion**

In sum, the results of Study 1B indicated that the Relationship Status Disclosure Index is a reliable measure that is modestly related to – but distinct from – general self-disclosure, and negatively related to private self-conscious and social anxiety. These negative associations are unsurprising as higher concerns with hidden aspects of the self as well as concerns with the presentation of the self to others should serve to limit disclosure. More importantly, RSD was shown to be negatively related to attachment avoidance, a construct related to the distancing of the self from others. RSD was also negatively related to attachment anxiety; however, further analyses indicated that this was only true for single participants. Single participants who fear rejection, and perhaps feel rejected because of their relationship status, would be likely to restrict their discussions of relationship status and avoid highlighting their single status. There was no association between attachment anxiety and RSD for participants currently in a relationship.

The relationship between RSD and self-esteem was marginally stronger for dating participants than for single participants; this suggests that disclosing one’s relationship status and feeling positively towards oneself is more closely related for people currently involved in a romantic relationship than for people currently unattached. Past research has established that secret relationships are associated with lower self-esteem (Lehmiller, 2009) and the present findings suggest that lower relationship disclosure in general may also be associated with lowered self-esteem for dating participants. It is likely that feeling good about oneself, being in a relationship, and sharing the happiness of your relationship with
others have cyclical effects on psychological well-being for people currently in dating relationships.

Contrary to hypotheses, RSD did not significantly correlate with relationship-specific identification or relationship commitment. My original line of theorizing was informed by the finding that mentioning a partner in conversation is a relationship maintenance tactic to ward off advances from potential mates (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011), thus, it seemed logical that being highly identified with your relationship or highly committed to your relationship would increase the motivation to maintain the relationship and subsequently, increase relationship status disclosure. However, this was not supported by the data. In retrospect, the conceptualization of RSD as a persistent individual tendency to disclose and discuss your relationship status to others may very well be independent of the quality of a current relationship. Indeed, none of the items of the RSDI assess the quality of the relationship, the valence of disclosure, or relationship maintenance. How committed one is to a particular relationship or how identified one is with a partner, may not affect RSD because relationship status disclosure can be positively valenced (e.g., “I think I want to move in with my partner”) or negatively valenced (e.g., “I think I want to break up with my partner”). Those who are committed to, and identified with their romantic partner may be equally likely to disclose relationship information as those who are not committed or identified with their partners. A person’s individual tendency to disclose such details may be the limiting factor in disclosure rather than the quality of the relationship. However, RSD did significantly correlate with relationship satisfaction suggesting that those who are happier with their relationships – but not more committed to or identified with their partners – are more likely to discuss and disclose their status.

Unexpectedly, RSD also varied by relationship status, participants currently in a relationship were more disclosing of their relationship status than were participants not currently in a relationship. There are two possible explanations for this unanticipated effect. First, it may be that people who are currently in a relationship have more to disclose about their romantic life than do single participants.
Second, many of the items on the RSDI explicitly refer to being in a romantic relationship, it may be that having current, direct experience to draw from when responding to these items results in higher endorsement of RSD than single participants relying on their memories of previous relationships or hypothetically responding to the items if they had not yet experienced a romantic relationship.
Chapter 4

Study Two

Study 2 examined the predictive validity of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index. I investigated whether participants currently in a romantic relationship actually differed in how often they mentioned their partner when responding to questions asked by either a same- or cross-sex partner in an online “Getting to Know You” task (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011). Previous research by Linardatos and Lydon (2011) manipulated the sex of an interaction partner in a “Getting to Know You” task to measure spontaneous relationship maintenance behaviours in response to a relational threat. I replicated their method (with a few modifications) to measure the relationship between frequency of partner mentions and Relationship Status Disclosure in response to a same- or other-sex interaction partner. In Study 2 I also examined whether failing to mention a romantic partner was a spontaneous or effortful process by comparing the groups across high and low cognitive conditions.

Across conditions, I predicted that higher disclosers would mention their partners earlier and more often than lower disclosers would. I also expected participants to mention their partner less when interacting with someone of the other-sex than when interacting with someone of the same-sex. Because someone of the other-sex represents a potential alternative mate, I further hypothesized that the main effect of sex-condition would be moderated by commitment such that the difference in partner mentions between conditions would be exacerbated for those low in commitment and reduced for those high in commitment. Specifically, for low relationship disclosers who have a tendency to suppress discussing their relationship with others, I theorized that higher commitment would increase the frequency with which thoughts of the partner are primed by the questions of the “Getting to Know You” task, and require participants to engage in cognitively expensive thought suppression. The addition of a cognitive load should reduce their abilities to inhibit disclosure and they should mention their partners more than if they are untaxed. Thus, I predicted that participants, who were low in RSD,
but high on commitment and/or high on relationship specific-identification, would mention their partners more under high cognitive load than in the absence of cognitive load.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 74 (15 Male) students ($M_{age} = 18.34$, $SD = 1.37$) enrolled in Psyc 100 at Queen's University who completed the RSDI and indicated they were currently in a romantic relationship (as assessed during prescreening). During debriefing, three participants indicated they were no longer in a romantic relationship and were removed from the data set. The final sample retained was 71 (14 Male) participants. Participants received either partial course credit or $5 in return for their participation.

Materials and Procedure

Participants in Study 2 were informed that the current research was investigating different communication mediums for initial interactions amongst first-year undergraduates. Specifically, participants were told that Queen's Community Housing was continuously striving to improve first-year roommate relationships and was considering implementing mandatory meetings before students moved in together. Participants were further told that the aim of the study was to determine if these meanings could take place online or if they were substantially more meaningful face-to-face.

Participants were then told that they would be engaging in a “Getting to Know You” task\(^2\) (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011) with another participant either online or in person. Assignment was fixed such that all participants were assigned to interact online via Pidgin Instant Messenger with another participant (who was actually the experimenter). Pidgin 2.10.9 for Windows is an online chat program that can be downloaded for free and allows users to send instant messages and save transcripts of their conversations.

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\(^2\) The procedure described here reflects minor modifications made to the original “Getting to Know You” task (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011) after a small pilot test indicated the task needed to be tweaked to better suit participant characteristics.
Participants were also asked to memorize a number prior to the interaction and report that number following the interaction in order to evaluate whether or not mentioning a romantic partner was taxing for participants low in relationship self-disclosure. Participants were told that this task was a pilot-test for an unrelated short-term memory project investigating how cumbersome it was for people to remember a phone number and area code while doing other tasks. Participants randomly assigned to the low cognitive load condition were asked to memorize a one digit number (8); participants assigned to the high cognitive load condition were asked to memorize an eight digit number (83675429)\(^3\).

To bolster the cover story and to provide an opportunity for a sex manipulation, participants were asked to fill out a brief introduction card with their sex, age, year of study and major (Appendix L). Once completed, the experimenter left the room, ostensibly to exchange the introduction cards. The experimenter returned shortly with the other participant’s manipulated introduction card. Only sex was manipulated for the speaker; approximately half of the participants were randomly assigned to receive a same-sex introduction card; the remaining received a cross-sex introduction card. All participants were led to believe that they would be interacting with a 20 year-old, first year, psychology major.

After participants reviewed their interaction partner’s introduction card, the conversation over IM commenced. As in Linardatos and Lydon (2011), participants were led to believe that there are two conditions in the interaction: a responder condition where participants were only allowed to answer questions and a questioner condition where participants were only allowed to ask the questions. All participants were assigned to the responder condition. The interaction partner asked the same modified set of 11 questions (based on Linardatos & Lydon, 2011; Appendix M) for each participant. Linardatos and Lydon (2011) designed the questions to make it progressively more difficult for the participant to avoid mentioning his or her partner. To illustrate, the questions progressed from “Where are you

\(^3\) Random assignment failed and there were marginal pre-existing differences in RSD between the high and low load conditions, further, there were no significant main effects or interactions with cognitive load. All presented analyses are collapsed across load conditions.
from?,” to “How are you adjusting to university so far?,” and “What do you normally do on the weekends?,” to “Are you keeping in touch with people from home?,” to “Do you have any plans for (Winter Break/Reading Week/Summer)?,” and the last questions was “On your ideal trip, would you travel alone or is there someone you’d go with?” When all 11 questions had been asked and answered, the interaction ended and transcripts of the online interaction were saved for coding and analysis. Transcripts contained a verbatim copy of the conversation.

Following the interaction, participants completed post-measures. First, to help bolster the cover story, participants completed a measure of closeness with their interaction partner as the target (Appendix N). Participants also rated their closeness to a classmate, a friend, a best friend and their romantic partner on this measure. Participants also recorded the number they were asked to memorize for the cognitive load task and whether or not they tried to remember their number to include as covariates in the cognitive load analyses. Participants also completed a manipulation check by completing the introduction card for their interaction partner and had the opportunity to write down what they thought the hypothesis of the study was. Finally, participants were debriefed, probed for suspicion, thanked, and given their research credit.

In order to maximize the lag between the laboratory session and the online follow-up and to prevent any carry-over effects, participants were e-mailed an invitation to complete an online follow-up survey between one and three months following the lab session. If participants had not yet completed the survey after one month, they were sent a second reminder e-mail. Participants were asked to fill out the measures of relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, relationship-specific identification, and general self-disclosure as described in Study 1B4.

Results

To assess whether participants higher in RSD mentioned their partners more often than

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4 Response rate was only 38%, timing of follow-up recruitment coincided with the end of the term and this may have affected the retention rate. Scales administered as part of the follow-up will not be included in the analyses presented.
participants lower in RSD did during the IM conversation, Relationship Status Disclosure scores were regressed on the total number of partner mentions. As expected, this analysis revealed that Relationship Status Disclosure significantly predicted the total number of partner mentions, $\beta = .30$, $t(69) = 2.60$, $p = .01$, with higher RSD scores predicting more partner mentions.

To assess whether participants higher in RSD mentioned their partners earlier than participants lower in RSD during the IM conversation, the question numbers of the first partner mention were reverse scored such that higher scores indicated earlier mention of a romantic partner. The distribution of first mentions was bimodal and recategorized into four subsets: no mentions ($N = 28$), late mentions (question 9, 10, or 11, $N = 15$), mid-mentions (question 6, 7, or 8, $N = 20$), and early mentions (question 3, 4, or 5, $N = 8$). An analysis of variance was conducted to compare RSD across mention categories. The ANOVA was nonsignificant, $F(3, 67) = 1.67$, $p = .18$, there were no significant differences in RSD among the no mentions ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .84$), late mentions ($M = 4.72$, $SD = .50$), mid-mentions ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.02$), and early mentions ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .85$).

To test whether participants mentioned their romantic partners less when interacting with someone of the other-sex than when interacting with someone of the same-sex, the gender match of the IM task was coded (-1 = Same-Sex, 1 = Other-Sex) and regressed on the total number of partner mentions along with RSD and the interaction term. This analysis revealed that RSD, $\beta = .32$, $t(67) = 2.63$, $p = .01$; as well as the gender match of the interaction, $\beta = -.26$, $t(69) = -2.31$, $p = .02$; predicted the total number of partner mentions. The interaction term was not significant, $\beta = .04$, $t(69) = .31$, $p = .76$. When participants were broken down by gender, analyses revealed that female participants mentioned their romantic partners less to a male participant ($M = .62$, $SD = .68$, $N = 29$) than they did a fellow female participant ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 1.12$, $N = 28$), $t(55) = -2.86$, $p = .006$. A similar analysis could not be conducted on the 14 male participants due to sample size.

**Study 2 Discussion**
Study 2 was conducted to examine the predictive utility of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index in a lab setting. Undergraduates who had completed the Relationship Status Disclosure Index during prescreening and who had indicated that they were currently in a romantic relationship were brought into the lab and participated in an online ‘Getting to Know You’ conversation task. The task was designed to make it progressively more difficult to avoid mentioning their romantic partner (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011). Participants were led to believe that they were interacting with either a same-sex or cross-sex interaction partner. Participants with higher Relationship Status Disclosure were hypothesized to mention their partners more often and earlier in the conversation than those lower in Relationship Status Disclosure. Participants in the cross-sex condition were hypothesized to mention their partners less than participants in the same-sex condition.

For total partner mentions, a regression analysis indicated that Relationship Status Disclosure significantly predicted how often participants mentioned their romantic partner during the conversation task. As hypothesized, higher disclosers were mentioning their partners more often than lower disclosers. This analysis also indicated that scores on the RSDI explained a significant proportion of the variance in the total partner mentions. The results of this analysis is strong preliminary evidence for the external validity of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index because how participants responded to the questionnaire items at time one was able to predict how often they mentioned their romantic partner during an online conversation at time two. This suggests that the items on the RSDI are accurately assessing participants’ true behavioural tendencies to discuss and disclose their relationship status, at least during an initial interaction with a stranger.

The hypothesis that higher disclosers would mention their partners earlier in the conversation than lower disclosers was not supported. An ANOVA indicated that participants not mentioning their partner, or mentioning their partner late, early or in the middle of the conversation, did not differ in their RSD levels. The IM conversations were rather brief (very few exceeded the 17 minute mark) and
it could be that the conversation was not long enough for RSD differences to emerge in timing of first mention. There were also three question items that were particularly likely to elicit a first partner mention, 14% of participants mentioned their partner first on question 7, 13% on question nine and 11% on question eleven. The relevance of the items to romantic partner mentions was not consistent across all questions and this was done to help conceal the true purpose of the research. However, it seems likely that RSD differences may emerge in first partner mentions if each question was equally relevant to a romantic relationship because this would help to avoid spikes in partner mentions for particular question items.

As hypothesized, participants mentioned their partners less when interacting with the other-sex than when interacting with the same-sex and this was independent of the main effect of RSD. When participants were analyzed by gender, females significantly mentioned their partners less when they believed they were interacting with a male, than when they believed they were interacting with a female. Female participants may have mentioned their romantic partners less to a male participant than a female participant because the male represents a potential alternative mate for them, whereas the female does not. Males were not analyzed due to sample size.

Females may avoid mentioning their romantic partners in initial encounters with males so they can maintain the possibility of an alternative mate. Indeed, participants less identified with their romantic relationships have been shown to mention their partners less to a member of the other-sex than participants more identified with their relationships (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011). Interestingly, while RSD and the gender match of the interaction each separately predicted total mentions, there was no interaction between participants’ tendencies to disclose their relationships and the sex manipulation. Thus, overall, people higher in RSD mentioned their partners less than people lower in RSD, and women mentioned their partners less to a man than to a woman, the lack of an interaction between the two suggests that general RSD tendencies may not be related to relationship maintenance processes as
high RSD did not prompt women to mention their partners more when interacting with a man.

Alternatively, it may be women’s greater focus on interpersonal relationships that prompts them to disclose their relationship status more often to women than to men. The belief that women may be more interested in hearing about and subsequently discussing a relationship may make women more disclosing about their relationships to other women but inhibit disclosure to men. This assertion is supported by research showing that female friendship dyads are characterized by face-to-face discussion whereas male friendship dyads are characterized by side-by-side activity (Brehm, 1985; Fehr, 1996; Wright 1982).

The results of Study 2 indicated that the Relationship Status Disclosure Index was able to predict how often participants mentioned their romantic partner during a scripted conversation but was not able to predict how early in the conversation participants first mentioned their partner. Women also mentioned their partners less when they believed they were chatting with a man than when they believed they were chatting with a woman.
Chapter 5

Study Three

The purpose of Study 3 was to investigate the predictive validity of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index in a more naturalistic setting by determining whether RSD could predict behaviour on Facebook. Participants were tracked on Facebook for ten weeks and their online activity was coded for relationship content. In addition to being tracked on Facebook, participants also completed surveys biweekly regarding their relationship status and changes and developments in their relationship status. I hypothesized that higher RSD would be associated with more Facebook content that was related to relationship status. Specifically, I hypothesized that participants higher in RSD would make more status updates pertaining to romantic relationship status, post more relationship content, and post more pictures with relationship content than participants lower in RSD. For photo content, I hypothesized that dating participants’ RSD scores would predict the proportion of photos they posted with their romantic partner. I also hypothesized that single participants’ RSD scores would predict the proportion of photos they posted in which they were alone. There were no hypotheses for the other photo categories (Friends, Family, and Scenic).

Method

Participants

Sixty-seven (Male = 12, $M_{age} = 18.00, SD = .79$) undergraduates at Queen's University currently enrolled in Psyc100 participated in the current study. At study onset, 55% of the participants were single, 1% was dating more than one person, 6% were primarily dating one person and 38% were in a relationship. At study completion, 58% of the participants were single, 6% were dating primarily one person, and 36% were in a relationship. Participants received partial course credit or $5 in return for their participation.
**Procedure**

Participants were invited to participate in a study of Facebook relational activity, after reading a letter of information outlining the basic purpose of the research, informed consent was provided when participants voluntarily added a Facebook profile created for the purposes of this research to their personal Facebook. Every other week, participants were e-mailed a link to complete a short survey asking them about romantic developments in their life. Each survey asked participants about their current dating status. If participants indicated they were single they were asked to rate their current interest in dating on a scale from 1 (*Not Interested*) to 7 (*Very Interested*). The interest in dating ratings were averaged across all responses to create a mean interest in dating variable. Single participants were also asked about their romantic interests in others (e.g., do they have a crush on anyone). The initials of their crushes were requested to aid in the classification of photos into the category of ‘Potential Mate’ (see below for a detailed discussion of photo coding protocol). If participants indicated they were primarily or steadily dating one person, participants were asked about the length of their relationship, the seriousness of their relationship, and they completed the same measures of relationship commitment (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$) and satisfaction (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) as described in Study 1B\(^5\) and an additional satisfaction scale. The Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988, Appendix Q) is a 7-item measure of general relationship satisfaction (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$). Respondents answer each item using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (low satisfaction) to 7 (high satisfaction). Sample items include: “*How well does your partner meet your needs;*” “*How good is your relationship compared to most;*” and “*How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship*”. The biweekly ratings of commitment and satisfaction were averaged across all responses to create mean satisfaction and mean commitment variables. On the final survey, all participants were asked to complete the RSDI in order to assess the test-retest reliability of the index.

\(^5\) With the exception that the scale metric of the RCS (Gagné & Lydon, 2003) was converted from a 9-point Likert scale to a 7-point Likert scale.
After the completion of each survey, participants’ Facebook profiles were coded biweekly by two independent coders for content that revealed any romantic developments disclosed in the survey. After the completion of the fifth and final survey, participants were debriefed, thanked, and provided with compensation.

**Coding Protocol**

Together, two coders (the author and a research assistant) developed the coding protocol based on an initial preview of participant profiles and relevant profile features. It was determined that relevant Facebook features included: status updates, other posts, profile pictures, cover photos, uploaded photos, tagged photos, and the ‘Relationship Status’, and ‘Interested In’ fields. The coding protocol coded for the presence or absence of relationship information in these features and an initial combined coding session determined that there was little disagreement between coders over this straightforward criteria. The participant profiles were split into two halves and for each round of coding, each coder was responsible for independently coding half of the participant profiles and on each subsequent coding, each coder was responsible for coding the profiles that they had not coded on the previous round. Any ambiguous profile information was brought to the attention of the other coder and discussed and resolved in conjunction with one another.

**Status Updates.** Status updates are text-only updates made by Facebook users to share their thoughts, feelings, and whereabouts. Specifically, in each coding round, all status updates from the previous 2 weeks were binarily coded as revealing of relationship status or unrelated to relationship status. Sample status updates that revealed relationship information are, “I have the best boyfriend ever”; “(cross-sex friend) is one good looking stud”; and “Florida for Valentine’s Day with my loves (2 same sex friends tagged) <3”.

**Other Posts.** Other Facebook posts included participants’ sharing of links, images, articles, memes, and e-cards, and any initial remarks made on their post. Specifically, in each coding round, all posts from
the previous 2 weeks were binarily coded as revealing of relationship status or unrelated to relationship status. Sample posts that revealed relationship information were “I killed cupid in self-defence” + image; “Friends and fam, have a lovely Valentine’s Day! :D All you need is love” + e-card; and a link to a YouTube video called how to look cute at the gym.

**Picture Coding**

Participants’ display photos (e.g., profile pictures and cover photos), uploaded photos (e.g., photos posted by the participant but not fixed to their profile display), and tagged photos (e.g., photos of the participant but added by another user), if present, were all coded biweekly into 8 categories. These photo categories included: (i) Alone (e.g., photos of just the participant); (ii) Romantic Partner (e.g., either a photo of the participant and their romantic partner or a photo of the romantic partner); (iii) Friends (e.g., either a photo of the participant with one or more other people or a photo of others); (iv) Potential Mate (e.g., a photo of the participant with another person that appeared to be more than a friend in the photo or in the comments on the photo); (v) Family (e.g., either a photo of the participant with a family member(s) or a photo of the family); (vi) Scenic (e.g., a photo that did not contain a human); (vii) Children (e.g., a photo of the participant with a child or a photo of children); and (viii) Celebrity (e.g., a photo of the participant with a celebrity or a photo of a celebrity).

**Profile Pictures.** Profile pictures are a fixed, immediately visible, displayed photo on the top left corner of Facebook profiles (see Appendix R). Profile pictures are permanently displayed on a profile and the profile picture appears next to a user’s name anytime they are active on Facebook (e.g., next to their updates and posts in the newsfeed, and anytime they comment on a photo or post). Profile pictures are also displayed if one user hovers his or her mouse over another user's name. Each coding round, the participants' current Facebook profile picture and any changes that had been made to the profile picture were coded. Due to limited changes in current profile pictures, participants' past profile pictures were coded up to a maximum of the 30 most recent photos ($M = 20.72, SD = 10.34$).
**Cover Photos.** Cover photos are a fixed, immediately visible, displayed banner image at the top of Facebook profiles. Cover photos are permanently displayed on a profile and are also displayed if one user hovers their mouse over another user’s name. Each coding round, the participants' current Facebook cover photo and any changes that had been made to the cover photo were coded. Due to limited changes in current cover photos, participants' past cover photos were coded up to a maximum of the 30 most recent photos ($M = 9.78, SD = 8.42$).

**Uploaded Photos.** Uploaded photos are pictures added to Facebook by the user but are not affixed to a display location. Uploaded photos appear on Facebook profiles in the timeline, as well as in the ‘Photos’ section, and these photos appear in the newsfeeds of Facebook friends. All photos uploaded by the participant during the current school year (e.g., September 1 – April 1) were coded, the total number of photos uploaded by individual participants ranged from 0 to 646 ($M = 63.21, SD = 103.98$).

**Tagged Photos.** Tagged photos are pictures that appear on a user’s Facebook profile but have been uploaded to Facebook by someone other than the participant. Tagged photos appear on Facebook profiles in the timeline, as well as in the ‘Photos’ section, and these photos appear in the newsfeeds of Facebook friends. Each coding round, all new tagged photos of the participants from the last 2 weeks were coded, the total number of photos participants were tagged in ranged from 0 to 101 ($M = 13.91, SD = 19.18$).

**Relationship Status.** Facebook allows users to select one of eleven relationship statuses to post to their profile or to leave this field blank. If a user is in a relationship, this information is immediately visible on their profile page, if a user is single, this information appears on their profile page but is not immediately visible. If a user does not disclose their relationship status, this field is absent from the profile information page. Each coding round, participants’ posted relationship status was coded according to whether or not it was present and if present, the status disclosed was also coded.

**Interested In.** The ‘Interested In’ section on Facebook allows users to indicate whether they are
interested in women, men, or both. Whether participants disclosed their sexual orientation on Facebook was binarily coded.

Data Analytic Strategy

Given limited variability in the biweekly coding sessions, all biweekly profile coding was summed and aggregated into totals and all binary variables were recoded into the recommend format (-1 and 1). Similarly, following Aiken and West (1991), all continuous predictors were mean centered prior to conducting regression analyses. There was also wide variability in participants’ total number of display, uploaded, and tagged photos, to control for differences in frequency of photo posts and changes, all analyses on photo content were conducted on the proportion of photos of each type. Proportional variables represent the ratio of a specific type of photo (e.g., Profile Pictures Alone) to all photos of that type (e.g., Profile Pictures). Furthermore, frequency analyses conducted on the photo categories determined that for the categories of Potential Mate, Children, and Celebrity, less than 75% of the sample had photos of these types and it was decided that these categories would not be analyzed. For the remaining 5 picture categories, Alone, Romantic Partner, Friends, Family, and Scenic, the majority of participants (>75%) had posted photos of these types, and these categories were used for analyses conducted on profile pictures, cover photos, uploaded photos, and tagged photos.

Results

Correlations

The interscale correlations for the Relationship Status Disclosure Index were analyzed for all participants (See Table 7) and then by dating status⁶. For all participants, RSD significantly correlated with dating status, and negatively with attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. For single participants (see Table 8), RSD was significantly and negatively associated with attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, however, RSD was not related to participants’ interest in dating.

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⁶ Participants were classified as single or dating based on survey reports of their dating status. Nine participants could not be classified because their dating status changed more than once over the course of the study.
Attachment anxiety and avoidance were negatively correlated with one another but neither measure was significantly associated with single participants’ interest in dating. For dating participants (See Table 9), RSD was not significantly related to either attachment dimension, relationship commitment or the two measures of relationship satisfaction. However, attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety were significantly and negatively associated with all measures of relationship satisfaction and commitment. Interestingly, for dating participants, attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety were not significantly correlated with one another. The measures of satisfaction and commitment were highly correlated with one another though. Because the measures of satisfaction and commitment were unrelated to RSD, these measures will not be included in subsequent analyses as the sample size is small and additional predictors in regression models limit the power of the analysis.

Table 7
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Inter-Scale Correlations for all Participants (N = 67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>- .27*</td>
<td>- .52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dating Status</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- .29*</td>
<td>- .53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Table 8
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Intercorrelations for Single Participants (n = 33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>-.52**</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interest in Dating</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
Status Updates

To test whether higher disclosers made more status updates pertaining to relationship status, Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status (-1 = Not Dating, 1 = Dating) were regressed on total status updates. RSD predicted a greater number of status updates made that contained relevant relationship information, $\beta = .32$, $t(55) = 2.33$, $p = .02$, but neither dating status, $\beta = -.16$, $t(55) = -1.18$, $p = .24$, nor the disclosure by status interaction, $\beta = -.07$, $t(55) = -.54$, $p = .59$, predicted relationship relevant status updates.

Other Posts

To assess whether higher disclosers made more Facebook posts containing relationship information, Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status were regressed on the number of posts containing relationship information. RSD marginally predicted greater relationship posts, $\beta = .26$, $t(55) = 1.90$, $p = .06$, whereas, dating status did not predict the number of relationship posts, $\beta = -.09$, $t(55) = -.69$, $p = .49$. The marginal main effect of RSD was qualified by a significant disclosure by dating status interaction, $\beta = -.26$, $t(55) = -2.04$, $p = .05$. For participants who were not dating, higher Relationship Status Disclosure was significantly associated with making more posts that disclosed relationship status information, $r(33) = .43$, $p = .01$, but for participants who were dating, Relationship Status Disclosure was unrelated to the number of relationship posts they made, $r(26) = -.02$, $p = .92$. 

Table 9
Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure Intercorrelations for Dating Participants ($n = 26$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RSD</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-51*</td>
<td>-45*</td>
<td>-54**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-52*</td>
<td>-59**</td>
<td>-58**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Satisfaction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.92**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Commitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.84**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Relationship Assessment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
Profile Pictures

To assess whether Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status affected the content of profile pictures, RSD and dating status were regressed on each of the 5 picture categories (See Table 10). For profile pictures with a Romantic Partner, higher RSD significantly predicted more frequent profile pictures with a romantic partner, $\beta = .26, t(55) = 2.03, p = .05$, similarly, being in a relationship marginally predicted posting a higher proportion of profile pictures with a romantic partner, $\beta = .24, t(55) = -2.03, p = .06$; but the disclosure by status interaction term was not a significant predictor of the proportion of profile pictures with a romantic partner, $\beta = .19, t(55) = 1.54, p = .13$.

For profile pictures with Family, RSD, $\beta = -.01, t(55) = -.10, p = .92$, did not significantly predict the proportion of profile pictures with family, however, dating status, $\beta = -.25, t(55) = -1.77, p = .08$, marginally predicted a higher proportion of family-oriented profile pictures for participants who were not dating. The disclosure by status interaction, $\beta = .01, t(55) = .08, p = .94$; did not significantly predict the proportion of profile pictures with family. The marginal main effect of dating status was unanticipated, to better conceptualize why singles tend to post more family oriented profile pictures than people in a relationship, a second regression was run on family profile pictures with Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10</th>
<th>Predictors of Profile Picture Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship Status Disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $p \leq .05$ is denoted in boldface.
Status Disclosure and interest in dating entered as predictors. Interest in dating was included in the model because no interpersonal measures related to family were included in the surveys but it seemed plausible that participants who are more interested in dating may be less likely to display photos of their family on Facebook in order to elicit attention from potential mates. Neither RSD, $\beta = -.06, t(37) = -.42, p = .67$; nor interest in dating, $\beta = -.21, t(37) = -1.49, p = .15$; predicted family profile pictures, however, the disclosure by interest interaction term did significantly predict family profile pictures, $\beta = .46, t(37) = 3.32, p = .003$. For participants more interested in dating than the average, higher disclosure was associated with having a higher proportion of family-oriented profile pictures, conversely, for participants less interested in dating than the average, higher disclosure was associated with having a lower proportion of family-oriented profile pictures.

For profile pictures Alone, neither Relationship Status Disclosure, $\beta = .14, t(55) = .38, p = .32$; Dating Status, $\beta = .05, t(55) = .38, p = .71$; nor the disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = -.08, t(55) = -.60, p = .55$, were significant predictors of the proportion of profile pictures Alone.

Figure 4. Proportion of profile pictures with family as a function of RSD and interest in dating for single participants.
Conceptually, a profile picture alone would be more indicative of single disclosure than relationship disclosure, thus, a second regression assessing the predictive utility of Relationship Status Disclosure and interest in dating for the proportion of profile pictures alone was run for single participants. Relationship Status Disclosure marginally predicted more frequent solo profile pictures for single participants, $\beta = .25$, $t(37) = 1.79$, $p = .08$, and interest in dating significantly predicted a higher proportion of solo profile pictures, $\beta = .48$, $t(37) = 3.41$, $p = .002$, but the disclosure by interest interaction term did not significantly predict solo profile pictures, $\beta = .14$, $t(37) = .99$, $p = .33$. Thus, for singles, higher RSD was marginally associated with posting more profile pictures alone and being more interested in dating significantly predicted posting a higher proportion of solo profile pictures.

For profile pictures with *Friends*, neither Relationship Status Disclosure, $\beta = -.01$, $t(55) = -.08$, $p = .93$; Dating Status, $\beta = -.08$, $t(55) = -.60$, $p = .56$; nor the disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = .004$, $t(55) = .03$, $p = .98$, were significant predictors of the proportion of profile pictures with friends.

For *Scenic* profile pictures, lower Relationship Status Disclosure significantly predicted posting a higher proportion of scenic profile pictures, $\beta = -.30$, $t(55) = -2.17$, $p = .03$. Neither dating status, $\beta = .13$, $t(55) = .93$, $p = .36$, nor the disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = -.10$, $t(55) = -.77$, $p = .44$, predicted scenic profile pictures.

*Cover Photos*

To assess whether Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status affected the content of cover photos, RSD and dating status were regressed on each of the 5 photo categories (see Table 11). *Romantic Partner* cover photos was the only category of cover photos with significant effects. RSD, $\beta = .20$, $t(49) = 1.50$, $p = .14$, did not significantly predict the proportion of cover photos with a romantic partner, however, dating status significantly predicted having a higher proportion of cover photos featuring a romantic partner if participants were classified as dating during the study, $\beta = .31$, $t(49) = 2.35$, $p = .02$. The disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = .19$, $t(49) = -1.50$, $p = .14$, was
nonsignificant.

Table 11
*Predictors of Cover Photo Content*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relationship Status Disclosure</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Disclosure x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Table 12
*Predictors of Uploaded Photo Content*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relationship Status Disclosure</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Disclosure x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Uploaded Photos

To assess whether Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status predicted the content of uploaded photos, RSD and dating status were regressed on each of the 5 photo categories (See Table 12). Again, the category *Romantic Partner* was the only category with significant effects. RSD, $\beta = .35$, $t(45) = 2.15$, $p = .04$; dating status, $\beta = .35$, $t(45) = 2.76$, $p = .008$; and the disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = .26$, $t(45) = .2.10$, $p = .04$; all significantly predicted the proportion of uploaded photos.
photos with a romantic partner. For participants classified as dating, higher relationship status disclosure was marginally associated with uploading a higher proportion of photos with a romantic partner, $r(26) = .41, p = .07$. For participants classified as not dating, there was no significant association between their relationship status disclosure and the proportion of photos uploaded with a romantic partner, $r(33) = .20, p = .29$

**Tagged Photos**

To assess whether Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status predicted the content of photos that participants were tagged in, RSD and dating status were regressed on each of the 5 photo categories (See Table 13). Again, Romantic Partner was the only photo category with significant effects. RSD, $\beta = -.01, t(44) = -.07, p = .95$, did not significantly predict the proportion of tagged photos with a romantic partner, however, dating status, $\beta = .32, t(44) = 2.10, p = .04$; significantly predicted the proportion of tagged photos with a romantic partner with participants classified as dating being tagged in a higher proportion of photos with a romantic partner. The disclosure by status interaction term, $\beta = .06, t(44) = .42, p = .68$; did not predict the proportion of tagged romantic partner photos.

**Table 13**

*Predictors of Tagged Photo Content*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photo Category</th>
<th>Relationship Status Disclosure $\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Dating Status $\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Disclosure x Status Interaction $\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.47</td>
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<td>.18</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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<td>.07</td>
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<td>.05</td>
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<td>Scenic</td>
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<td>.34</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance is denoted in boldface.*
Relationship Status

In order to assess whether scores on the Relationship Status Disclosure Index could predict whether or not participants disclosed their relationship status on Facebook, a logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effects of Relationship Status Disclosure on the likelihood that participants disclosed their relationship status on Facebook. The logistic regression model was statistically significant, \( \chi^2(1) = 14.54, p < .001 \). The model explained 27.1% (Nagelkerke \( R^2 \)) of the variance in Facebook relationship status disclosure and correctly classified 77.3% of cases. Higher RSD was associated with an increased likelihood of posting a relationship status on Facebook, \( \beta = 1.60 \), Wald’s Statistic = 10.68, \( p = .001 \).

Interested In

A regression testing the predictive utility of Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status in predicting sexual orientation disclosure on Facebook determined that higher Relationship Status Disclosure significantly predicted orientation disclosure, \( \beta = .30, t(55) = 2.22, p = .03 \); but neither dating status, \( \beta = -.11, t(55) = -.78, p = .44 \); nor the disclosure by status interaction term, \( \beta = -.18, t(55) = 1.44, p = .15 \); reached significance. Relationship Status Disclosure and dating status together explained a marginally significant proportion of the variance in sexual orientation disclosure on Facebook, \( R^2 = .11, F(3,55) = 2.29, p = .09 \).

Study 3 Discussion

The purpose of Study 3 was to investigate the external validity of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index by observing behaviour in the naturally occurring context of Facebook. Undergraduates added a research profile to their own personal Facebook account and their online behaviour was tracked for ten weeks. Specifically, their status updates, shared posts, profile pictures, cover photos, uploaded photos, tagged photos, ‘relationship status’ and ‘interested in’ sections were coded for content related to their relationship status. Participants also completed biweekly surveys.
online to assess any changes and development in their romantic status.

It was hypothesized that higher relationship disclosers would make more status updates and post more content related to their relationship status on Facebook than lower relationship disclosers would. RSD was also hypothesized to predict whether participants disclosed their relationship status and sexual orientation on Facebook. Finally, the content of photos was expected to differ by relationship status and RSD.

As expected, RSD significantly predicted how many relationship relevant statuses participants made and this was independent of relationship status. Participants, both single and dating, who highly endorsed the items of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index, were more disclosing of their relationship status in their Facebook updates than participants who scored lower on the RSDI. Analyses also showed that RSD marginally predicted the number of relationship relevant Facebook posts; however, RSD and dating status interacted to predict the number of relationship relevant posts participants made. Surprisingly, for participants classified as dating, there was no association between RSD and their relationship posts on Facebook. However, single participants higher in RSD made more relationship status relevant posts than single participants lower in RSD. Why there was no effect for dating participants is unclear, it may be that while in a relationship, people are more likely to make disclosing updates and post disclosing photos rather than make other posts that disclose their relationship status. For single participants, their relationship posts were most typically links to funny videos and articles on the woes of dating and single life (e.g., how to look cute at the gym or a rundown of the sexual economics of dating). Perhaps their motivation to post such links is not only to disclose their singleness but also excuse their singleness by highlighting the precarious mating market.

For profile pictures, differences by RSD or dating status were found for the photo categories romantic partner, family, alone, and scenic. There were no effects of RSD or dating status for profile pictures with friends. Photos with friends are possibly the most popular and frequent type of photo
posted on Facebook, it may be that posting photos with friends is such a normative Facebook behaviour that it is relatively immune to individual differences in RSD or other constructs.

For profile pictures with a romantic partner, participants higher in RSD and those classified as dating, posted a higher proportion of profile pictures with a romantic partner than participants lower in RSD and participants classified as not dating. Dating participants also had a higher proportion of cover photos with a romantic partner compared to single participants. Thus, being in a relationship, and being higher in RSD, was predictive of displaying one’s romantic partner in profile pictures and cover photos. Without being in a relationship, there would be no romantic partner to display in your photos so the effects of dating status are unsurprising. More importantly, in addition to being in a relationship, higher RSD also independently predicted a higher proportion of profile pictures with a romantic partner. Being in a relationship made it more likely that one would post a romantic partner profile picture but being a high relationship discloser in a relationship makes one especially likely to have one’s romantic partner displayed in profile pictures.

For family profile pictures, single participants posted a marginally higher proportion than did dating participants and RSD and interest in dating predicted the proportion of family-orientation profile pictures for single participants. For participants less interested in dating than the average, higher relationship disclosure was associated with having a lower proportion of family profile pictures. Conversely, for participants more interested in dating than the average, higher relationship disclosure was associated with having a higher proportion of family profile pictures. Why this is true is not immediately apparent. The effect of single participants posting more family oriented profile pictures than dating participants may be explained by single participants spending more time with their families than dating participants because they do not have to split their time with a romantic partner, however, there were no differences for profile pictures with friends so it is difficult to interpret this difference in profile picture content in terms of sociability.
The interaction between RSD and interest in dating in positively predicting profile pictures with family was surprising. When entering the interest in dating as a covariate in the model, I had hypothesized that participants more interested in dating would be posting fewer profile pictures with their family because they would be trying to solicit attention from potential mates by displaying profile pictures that were characterized more by attractiveness and fun-lovingness, however, the opposite was true, single participants higher in RSD and who wanted to date were more likely to have their family in their profile pictures with them than participants less interested in dating. Perhaps participants with strong ties to their families want to find a mate with similar ties to their family so they display their interest in their family on their profiles and look for mates who do the same.

Furthermore, in retrospect the coding of family photos could have been more precise in distinguishing between photos with siblings, and photos with parents, and photos with extended family, to identify whether RSD and interest in dating covary in predicting a particular type of family photo. There were several participants who seemed to have especially close sibling relationships based on the frequency of posted photos with their siblings. It may be that photos with siblings are much the same as photos with friends and are posted for similar motivations, since there were no effects for profile pictures with friends, it seems plausible that sibling photos may also be unaffected by RSD, dating status, and interest in dating.

There is also a phenomenon on Facebook known as ‘Throwback Thursday’ in which users post and hashtag photos of their past on Thursdays. Given the young age of the sample, most of their ‘Throwback Thursday’ pictures were of their childhood and also included a parent or grandparent. Unfortunately, ‘Throwback Thursday’ was not included as a photo code. However, it seems plausible that single people who are higher in RSD and also interested in dating are more likely to participate in the Facebook games and rituals that ‘Throwback Thursday’ exemplifies in order to bolster their online presence, and the effects for profile pictures with family could be reflecting differences in Facebook
behaviour rather than a difference for this specific photo category.

For profile pictures alone, higher RSD marginally predicted more frequent solo profile pictures for single participants and higher interest in dating significantly predicted a higher proportion of profile pictures alone. Thus, single participants are more likely to have a higher proportion of profile pictures alone when they are more interested in dating, and higher RSD also makes them marginally more likely to have solo profile pictures. Being alone in one’s profile picture makes it easier for Facebook users to find, identify, and friend you, a positive scenario for single people who are interested in dating. Furthermore, dating applications like “Tinder”, take users’ Facebook profile pictures to match them with potential dates, and it is likely that being more interested in dating makes one more likely to use applications like ‘Tinder’ and maintain a solo profile picture on Facebook.

Independently of relationship status, lower RSD was predictive of a higher proportion of scenic profile pictures. This suggests that being low in relationship status disclosure is associated with posting a higher proportion of profile pictures that not only conceal relationship status but also the identity of the participant.

For cover photos, there were no effects of RSD or dating status for the cover photo categories of alone, with friends, and scenic. For family cover photos, higher RSD marginally predicted a higher proportion of family photos for single participants only but interest in dating did not affect the proportion of cover photos with family. As mentioned above, perhaps single participants spent more time with their families, and took photos of their time with their family because they were not spending time or taking photos with a romantic partner.

For uploaded photos, the only photo category with significant effects of RSD and dating status was romantic partner. Being higher in RSD and being in a relationship was significantly predictive of uploading more photos with a romantic partner. There were no effects of RSD or dating status for the uploaded photo categories of family, alone, with friends, or scenic.
For tagged photos, the only significant effect was for dating status on the proportion of photos that participants were tagged in along with their romantic partner. Participants classified as dating were more likely to be tagged in photos with a romantic partner than were single participants. Dating status did not affect the proportion of tagged photos in the categories of alone, with friends, family, or scenic. RSD did not significantly predict being tagged in photos of any type. Conceptually, this bodes well for the utility of the Relationship Status Disclosure Index because it functioned to predict the proportion of several types of photos that participants voluntarily disclosed to Facebook, but participants’ RSD was not related to photos of the participant that someone else had disclosed on Facebook and tagged them in.

Finally, RSD also significantly predicted whether or not participants disclosed their relationship status on Facebook and whether or not participants disclosed their sexual orientation on Facebook. In addition to posting different types of photos, higher relationship disclosers are also more likely to disclose their relationship status and sexual orientation on Facebook.
Chapter 6

General Discussion

In this thesis, I sought to introduce a novel construct, Relationship Status Disclosure, and provide a scale to measure it. My findings indicate that Relationship Status Disclosure is a novel construct that can be measured reliably and demonstrates convergent and divergent validity, as well as external validity in two contexts – a lab setting and on Facebook.

Summary of Findings

The RSDI correlated more strongly with general self-disclosure, social anxiety, and private self-consciousness than it did with relationship satisfaction, commitment, and identification. Despite dating participants’ higher RSD than single participants, this pattern of associations suggests that RSD is more closely associated with the disclosure dimension than the relationship dimension because RSD did not meaningfully covary with measures of relationship quality but did correlate with measures of self-disclosure and privacy. Indeed, past research has shown that revealing a relationship status on Facebook predicts the disclosure of more personal information (e.g., age, address, and employment) compared to an undisclosed relationship status (Nosko, Wood, & Molema, 2010), strengthening my suppositions that low RSD is characterized more accurately by higher concerns with privacy rather than poor relationship quality.

Consistent with this interpretation, for all participants, RSD was negatively related to attachment avoidance, and for single participants, RSD was negatively related to attachment anxiety as well. While these attachment dimensions certainly influence romantic relationships, both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety, like RSD, were meaningfully related to general self-disclosure, social anxiety and privacy concerns. Attachment avoidance (the fear of intimacy) and attachment anxiety (the fear of rejection) are each partially characterized by interpersonal discomfort, and social anxiety has a limiting influence on disclosure (Cuming & Rapee, 2010). Thus, viewing close others as
reliable and effective sources of support and being comfortable with intimacy were positively associated with higher Relationship Status Disclosure, possibly because low attachment avoidance and low attachment anxiety mitigate social anxiety and concerns about the presentation of self, making disclosure less risky.

Across studies, RSD was unrelated to relationship commitment, and RSD was positively associated with relationship satisfaction in one sample (Study 1B), however, this association was not found with a second sample (Study 3) on the same measure of satisfaction (Gagné & Lydon, 2003) or on an alternate measure of relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, 1988). This discrepancy in results is likely due to differences in sample characteristics as both analyses were powerful enough to detect the association between satisfaction and commitment. Future research should re-examine the association between RSD and relationship satisfaction to determine if there is a reliable positive association.

Interestingly, there was no gender difference in RSD, this is surprising given the significant association between RSD and general self-disclosure, the known tendencies of women to self-disclose more than men (Bond, 2009; Grigsby & Weatherley, 1983), and societal differences in how men and women display their relationship status (e.g., the differential wearing of engagement rings). It may be that the social script for verbal relationship disclosure is the same for both genders, and while women may be encouraged to discuss their relationships in more depth than men, both women and men are expected to disclose whether they are in a relationship. Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that men and women do not differ in their online self-disclosure and Hollenbaugh and Ferris (2014) suggest that Facebook itself is “scrubbing out these traditional differences” (p. 56) by encouraging all users to self-disclose and normalizing self-disclosure for both genders. Perhaps the social networking experience of millennials has normalized self-disclosure online for both women and men, and this has had a mitigating influence on gender differences in offline contexts as well – at least on self-reports of relationship status disclosure.
In validating the RSDI, I have demonstrated that for dating participants, RSD was predictive of more partner mentions in an instant messaging conversation with a stranger, making more relationship-relevant Facebook status updates, and posting a higher proportion of profile pictures and uploaded photos with their romantic partner on Facebook. For single participants, I have demonstrated that RSD was predictive of making more relationship-relevant Facebook posts, posting a higher proportion of profile pictures alone, and if also interested in dating, RSD was predictive of a higher proportion of profile pictures with family. For all participants, RSD was also predictive of a higher proportion of scenic profile pictures, and disclosing their relationship status and sexual orientation on Facebook.

Previous research had shown that single Facebook users disclosed the most relationship information (‘Looking For’ and sexual orientation) on Facebook (Nosko, Wood, & Molema, 2010), however, in the current research, single and dating participants were equally likely to disclose their sexual orientation on Facebook, and the ‘Looking For’ feature of Facebook had been removed prior to the onset of this research. As that feature allowed users to indicate whether they were interested in friendship, a relationship, or whatever they could get, it is likely that differences by relationship status in ‘Looking For’ disclosure was responsible for Nosko, Wood, and Molema’s (2010) report that single participants disclosed more relationship information than dating participants.

Importantly, RSD was only predictive of the content of Facebook photos that the participants had posted to Facebook of themselves and not the content of participant photos that had been uploaded by other users and tagged to participant profiles. While Facebook affords users control over the visibility of tagged photos, they do not have control over the content, thus, tagged photos were independent of participant relationship status disclosure, but RSD was predictive of profile picture and uploaded photo content – the photos that participants voluntarily disclosed to their networks.

Limitations & Future Directions

Despite the promising evidence for the predictive utility of the RSDI across studies, this
research program was not without its limitations. The largest drawback was a randomization failure with the cognitive load manipulation which, in conjunction with participant attrition in Study 2, did not permit analysis of the cognitive load manipulation as intended. The sample retained with the follow-up was too small to examine the interactive effects of cognitive load, relationship commitment, and relationship-specific identification on partner mentions in the IM task. As the cognitive load manipulation was designed to assess whether failing to mention a romantic partner was an effortful or spontaneous process, this question remains unanswered and the conclusions of my thesis would have been strengthened had I been able to analyze the data as intended. Despite the lack of associations between RSD and commitment, and relationship-specific identification, it still seems likely that the more identified with – or committed to – a romantic partner one is, the more likely one is to mention their partner, such that, under high cognitive load even a low relationship discloser would be unable to suppress mentioning their partner. Future research is necessary to address this question.

Second, while participant characteristics were well-suited to the research program as they were drawn from a dating population with different statuses to disclose, the gender ratio of the participants in studies 2 and 3 did not permit analyses by gender. While men and women did not differ in self-reported RSD, my research was unable to assess whether there were gender differences in RSD behaviour in an IM conversation or on Facebook. Future studies addressing gender differences in RSD will need a larger sample of males.

Similarly, while eighteen year olds were an optimal population for initially examining RSD in a dating population, the brief window of observation did not permit me to assess how transitioning from single to being in a relationship affected RSD. I did demonstrate that dating participants had higher RSD than single participants, thus, it is plausible that transitioning into a relationship is associated with increases in RSD or that transitioning from a relationship to a single status is associated with decreases in RSD. Longitudinal research should address the stability of RSD within an individual as they
transition across dating statuses to determine contextual influences on the construct. The interactive effects of dating status with age are also a prime topic for future research. Do singles decrease their RSD as they age because their single status becomes increasingly stigmatized (Byrne, 2009)? And when dating relationships transition to marriages, does RSD increase as a result of this deeper commitment to – and involvement with – a romantic partner?

According to the investment model of close relationships (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998), there are three factors that determine relationship commitment – satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment. While the investment model framework was not used to inform the current research on relationship status disclosure, it has been established here that satisfaction may also relate to RSD (Study 1B) and that the availability of an alternative mate affects RSD, at least for women (Study 2). However, investments were not assessed, as relationship investments were outside the scope of this research investigation. Although there are intangible investments in all romantic relationships, such as emotional and time investments, the investments of marriage tend to be more tangible than those of dating relationships, such as a mortgage, a joint bank account, or a child. Presumably, even if one is a low relationship discloser by predisposition, it would become increasingly difficult to avoid a relationship status being known when tangible investments like mortgages require explicit relationship status disclosure. And paperwork aside, increases in tangible investments would simply make it more difficult to avoid mentioning a relationship status when one lives with a romantic partner, co-parents, and makes joint decisions. Future research should address these questions by studying samples of older adults with larger investments in their romantic relationships than the current dating sample.

Another limitation of this research program was its inability to obtain a sample of couples to assess how two individual RSD tendencies interact to influence overall relationship status disclosure, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment. The attributions people make about their partner’s RSD would be a promising avenue to study. Perhaps, being high in RSD but having a partner
low in RSD, leads one to perceive their partner as not being very committed. Perhaps being low in RSD but having a partner high in RSD, leads one to perceive their partner as clingy. While the results of the current research suggest that RSD is relatively independent of relationship quality, how people perceive and interpret their partner’s RSD might influence their relationship quality.

Recent research has demonstrated that relationship visibility on Facebook is associated with network perceptions of relationship quality; outsiders perceive a romantic relationship as better when both members of the couple display dyadic photos and relationship statuses; and these outsider ratings of quality correlated with self-report quality (Emery, Muise, Alpert, & Le, in press). Thus, if people interpret others’ relationship visibility as indicative of a strong relationship, these expectations likely transfer into their own romantic relationships and a lack of relationship status disclosure on behalf of one’s partner, may lead one to infer poor relationship functioning and create conflict in the relationship.

In addition to studying the perceptions of RSD, it is necessary for future research to assess the motivations underlying relationship disclosure to determine what drives relationship status disclosure. The results of the current research suggest that RSD is less of a relationship maintenance process and more of a self-presentation process; this begs the question of why people differ in the extent to which they present themselves as someone with a relationship status. What are the motivations underlying high or low relationship status disclosure? Attachment avoidance appears to be one variable strongly related to low RSD independent of relationship status; however, general self-disclosure was the only variable that positively correlated with RSD independent of relationship status and the strength of this association was moderate. Thus, little is known about what predicts RSD other than attachment orientations, self-disclosure, and being in a relationship, and future research is necessary to understand what types of factors promote people to disclose their relationship status.

Further research on the alternative three factors of RSD, Attitude, Reveal, and Conceal, and the
specific antecedents and consequences of each factor may be able to more clearly reveal the associated factors that promote or inhibit relationship status disclosure. The Attitude factor refers to beliefs about the propriety of relationship status disclosure and comfort with relationship status disclosure. It may be that the Attitude factor reflects a socialization process regarding how one ought to disclose a relationship status. It is possible that cultural differences in socialization (e.g., the collectivism-individualism dimension) regarding appropriate relationship disclosure may affect the Attitude factor.

Differences in Attitude, may not only affect how one discloses a relationship status, but also how one interprets other people’s relationship status disclosure. For example, the attitude that it is best to not be too disclosing about one’s relationship status could sour perceptions of others’ relationship status disclosure as inappropriate. Indeed, Facebook profiles that displayed highly intimate relationship disclosure (e.g., “Pining away for Jordan…I just love you so much I can’t stand it!”) were liked less than those that displayed low intimacy relationship disclosure, (e.g., “I love my girlfriend <3”), which in turn, were liked marginally less than profiles that displayed non relationship disclosure (e.g., “Phoneless for a bit, email me!”) (Emery, Muise, Alpert, & Le, in press). It seems plausible that Attitudes toward RSD may potentially mediate how people interpret – and respond to – the relationship status disclosure of others.

The Reveal factor captures the dimension of open relationship status disclosure, feeling that is important, expecting that a partner also discloses, wanting to share the happiness of a relationship, and informing others when relationships end. This factor captures the social aspect of relationship status disclosure more than the other factors do and it seems plausible that social support seeking may be an antecedent of the Reveal dimension. If social support seeking is indeed related to the Reveal dimension, gender differences may possibly emerge on this factor. While women and men both desire intimacy in their close relationships (Wright, 1998), women tend to have more close relationships that are characterized by discussion than men do (Brehm 1985; Fehr, 1996; Wright, 1982) from early childhood to adulthood (Cross & Madson, 1997). It seems plausible that due to more experience with receiving and providing social support from a variety of sources, women may endorse the Reveal factor
more than men do, possibly because women gain more benefits from overt relationship disclosure and men are disparaged for their overt relationship disclosure (Fox, Warber, & Mackstaller, 2013).

Finally, the Conceal factor of RSD refers to overt privacy concerns about disclosing a relationship status and deliberately misrepresenting one’s relationship status or misleading other people about one’s relationship status both verbally and behaviourally. The Conceal factor, thus, then may potentially be more influenced by couple characteristics than the other factors. For example, it seems plausible that couples with a marginalized status (e.g., homosexual, interracial, or large age gap; Lehmiller, 2009) would endorse the concealment of a relationship status more highly than nonmarginalized relationships to avoid prejudice. Similarly, people engaged in a secret relationship (Wegner, Lane, & Dimitri, 1994), or with a history of a secret relationship, would likely endorse the Conceal dimension more than people with a history of nonsecret relationships because of their experience with concealment. However, analyses on the Conceal factor also demonstrated that individual differences, specifically, attachment avoidance was related to this dimension more strongly and more reliably than the other factors. Attachment avoidance is likely one of the strongest antecedents of this dimension. The discomfort with intimacy associated with attachment avoidance is captured by this subscale with items referring to the avoidance of public displays of affection and the avoidance of labels like boyfriend or girlfriend.

Furthermore, compared to the global RSD factor, as well as the Attitude and Reveal factors, the Conceal factor was the most strongly associated with relationship quality measures. Specifically, reverse-scored Conceal was positively associated with both satisfaction and commitment (Study 1B significant, Study 3, nonsignificant), and negatively associated to attachment avoidance, which was negatively associated with relationship quality measures. Poor relationship quality may be an antecedent of Conceal or it may be a consequence. It seems plausible that one may feel it necessary to

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7 In support of this hypothesis, a participant described that her relationship was not FBO “to withhold the orientation (homosexual) of the relationship, [and] to prevent tension in the relationships between each of our friend/social groups”
conceal their relationship because one is dissatisfied and not committed; however, it is also plausible that the concealment of the relationship and associated self-regulation has the consequence of lowering satisfaction and commitment to that relationship. Related to poor relationship functioning, avoidant attachment also predicts participation in extradyadic sex (Beaulieu-Pelletier, Philippe, Lecours, & Couture, 2011), and it seems plausible that endorsement of the Conceal factor may similarly predict seeking sexual satisfaction outside of a relationship, a process likely mediated by relationship satisfaction and commitment. This seems especially plausible when items like “when I am in a relationship, I misrepresent myself as single to most people” are taken into consideration.

However, as the global index was not designed to assess three factors, my discussion of these factors is likely incomplete as further research is necessary to refine measurement of the three subscales to enhance their interpretability. A study assessing people’s attitudes, perceptions, and motivations associated with revealing a relationship, concealing a relationship, revealing a single status, and concealing a single status, would help to identify potentially missing themes of Relationship Status Disclosure. The addition of new themes into the index would help to generate new items that would further refine the measurement of the subscales by enhancing internal consistency, which would help strengthen the interpretability and predictive utility of all three factors.

In re-examining the scale, it also becomes apparent that the majority of the items on the RSDI are relationship centric, and this begs the question of whether my research actually managed to assess single disclosure as thoroughly as relationship disclosure. While I was able to predict the Facebook behaviour of singles based on their RSDI responses, it remains to be seen whether the pattern of correlations for singles would change if the scale better addressed disclosing a single status or perhaps we could predict more types of disclosure behaviour if the scale was better tailored to singles. In its current form, the RSDI only contains 3 items that refer to aspects of singlehood. In retrospect, a number of items could have been simply reworded to reflect both being single and being in a
relationship. For example, the item, “I only tell people I am in a relationship if they ask me directly”, could be reworded as “I only tell people I am single or in a relationship if they ask me directly”. Other items could be similarly reworded to better address singles, alternatively, the addition of new items more specific to singles could be generated and added to the scale, such as, “I notify people when I am single”, “When I am single, I attend events like weddings without a plus one”, and “I would prefer not to let others know when I am single”.

By tailoring the RSDI more specifically to singles, we may be better able to address questions like does the fear of being single predict higher or lower disclosure? And are singles truly less disclosing when they are higher in attachment anxiety or did this negative association arise because the majority of RSDI items explicitly referenced relationships and highlighted being single as the absence of a relationship? Future research using a more refined RSDI may be better equipped to answer more theoretically meaningful questions about single disclosure than this measure was designed to assess.

In conclusion, my thesis introduced the construct of Relationship Status Disclosure, created a measurement tool to assess this construct, and validated the measure. At the outset, I also introduced the reader to Adam and Hannah, and we have learned several things about this young couple throughout this investigation. First, we have learned that there is a Relationship Status Disclosure construct to measure, and that Adam would likely score low on this measure and Hannah high. Second, we have learned that their differing RSD levels does not reflect differences in commitment but may potentially reflect that Hannah is more satisfied with the relationship than Adam is. Third, we have learned that we could predict Adam and Hannah’s behaviour. For example, if either Adam or Hannah were to strike up a conversation with a classmate about the weekend, Hannah would mention Adam more than Adam would mention Hannah. Hannah would also be more likely to feature Adam in her profile picture or mention him in a status update than Adam would be. What we do not yet know is how Adam and Hannah’s differing Relationship Status Disclosure will interact to influence their
relationship quality and experiences, as well as the ultimate outcome of their relationship, however, further research is necessary to address these questions.
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Appendix A

Relationship Status Disclosure Index

Please take a moment to recall your past romantic relationships and – if applicable – your current romantic relationship. After you have taken this moment, please rate your agreement with the following items below on the scale provided:

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<tr>
<td>Disagree completely</td>
<td>Neither disagree nor agree</td>
<td>Agree completely</td>
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1. I let people know when I have a romantic interest in – or crush on – someone. _____
2. I update and share my relationship status to my online networks. _____
3. I wait until the relationship is serious before telling people I am in a romantic relationship. _____
4. I only tell people I am in a relationship if they ask me directly. _____
5. I avoid labels like boyfriend or girlfriend when I am referring to my romantic partner in conversation. _____
6. I notify people of my romantic relationship only after my partner has. _____
7. I notify people when my romantic relationships end. _____
8. I selectively omit details in conversation that would suggest I am in a relationship. _____
9. I tell people about my romantic relationships even when they are casual. _____
10. My close friends and family know when I am single and they know when I am seeing someone. _____
11. My romantic partner and I avoid being affectionate in front of people who do not know we are a couple. _____
12. Only close friends and family know when I am in a relationship. _____
13. When I am in a new relationship, I want everyone to know and share in my happiness. _____
14. When I am in a relationship, I misrepresent myself as single to most people. _____
15. I would describe myself as a private person when it comes to telling others about my romantic relationships. _____
16. I think I am quite open in terms of sharing information about my romantic relationships. _____
17. I would be upset if my partner did not let others know that we are a couple. _____
18. When in a relationship, I think it’s important to let everyone else know that you are with someone. _____
19. I would prefer that my partner did not share information about our relationship with others. _____
20. I think it is best not to be too disclosing about your own romantic relationship. _____
21. I typically don’t want to talk about my romantic relationships with people I don’t know very well. _____

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Appendix B
Letter of Information – Study 1B
Investigating Students’ Social Relationships

This research is being conducted by Erin Larson, graduate student. She is working with Tara MacDonald, Associate Professor, of the Department of Psychology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

What is this study about? The purpose of this research is to explore the social relationships of university students. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires pertaining to social relationships. We estimate that it takes about 30 minutes to complete these questionnaires. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as frankly as possible, you may decline to answer any questions or withdraw at any time if you find any material objectionable or if you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your standing in school. We would also appreciate if you consent at the end of the study to be contacted about future research opportunities. You have the option to refuse future research invitations as well. If you agree to be contacted about future studies, you are under no obligation to participate in these studies, you will simply be notified when they are available and can decide to participate or not participate when the time comes.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this study? We do not foresee any major risks associated with your participation in this research. However, some measures are of a sensitive or personal nature and you may not feel comfortable responding to them. We remind you that you are free not to answer any questionnaires or items that you find objectionable. If you choose to omit responses to any items, you will not be penalized in any way.

What will happen to my responses? We will keep your responses confidential. We will store the data in a locked room until the raw data is no longer needed. Only experimenters in the Social Psychology Lab will have access to this area. To ensure confidentiality, your responses have been given a unique identification number, please do not put your name on any of the answer sheets. The data may also be presented in professional psychological journals or at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will be of group means and differences, not individual responses, and will never breach individual confidentiality. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

Will I be compensated for my participation? Yes. In exchange for your help, we will compensate you with 0.5 of a maximum 5.0 credits you may earn toward your final Psychology 100 grade by participating in departmental experiments. If you are not enrolled in the Psychology 100 course or have completed the maximum 5 credits for PSYC100, we will compensate you with $5 cash. If you choose to withdraw your participation, you will still receive compensation for your time.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at 11eml6@queensu.ca or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated. Please keep a copy of this information form for your records.

Dr. T. MacDonald  Erin Larson
Associate Professor  B.A.H., M.Sc. Candidate
Appendix C

Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975)

Below are twenty-three statements that may or may not be characteristic of the way you see yourself as a person. Read each one carefully and rate whether the statement is characteristic or uncharacteristic of you using the rating scale below. Select the number of your answer after each question.

Extremely uncharacteristic = 0
Generally uncharacteristic = 1
Equally characteristic and uncharacteristic = 2
Generally characteristic = 3
Extremely characteristic = 4

1. I’m always trying to figure myself out. ________
2. I’m concerned about my style of doing things. ________
3. Generally, I’m very aware of myself. ________
4. It takes me time to overcome my shyness in new situations. ________
5. I reflect about myself a lot. ________
6. I’m concerned about the way I present myself. ________
7. I’m often the subject of my own fantasies. ________
8. I have trouble working when someone is watching me. ________
9. I constantly scrutinize myself. ________
10. I get embarrassed very easily. ________
11. I’m self-conscious about the way I look. ________
12. I find it hard to talk to strangers. ________
13. I’m generally attentive to my inner feelings. ________
14. I usually worry about making a good impression. ________
15. I’m constantly examining my motives. ________
16. I feel anxious when I speak in front of a large group. _______

17. One of the last things I do before I leave the house is look in the mirror. _______

18. I sometimes have the feeling that I’m off somewhere watching myself. _______

19. I’m concerned about what other people think of me. _______

20. I’m alert to changes in my mood. _______

21. I’m usually aware of my appearance. _______

22. I’m aware of the way my mind works when I work through a problem. _______

23. Large groups make me nervous. _______
Appendix D
Self-Disclosure Index (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983)

Please rate your willingness to discuss the following topics with a friend.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss not at all</td>
<td>Discuss fully and completely</td>
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1. My personal habits ______
2. Things I have done which I feel guilty about ______
3. Things I wouldn't do in public ______
4. My deepest feelings ______
5. What I like and dislike about myself ______
6. What is important to me in life ______
7. What makes me the person I am ______
8. My worst fears ______
9. Things I have done which I am proud of ______
10. My close relationships with other people ______
Appendix E

Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

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<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. My close relationships are an important reflection of who I am. __________
2. When I feel very close to someone, it often feels to me like that person is an important part of who I am. __________
3. I usually feel a strong sense of pride when someone close to me has an important accomplishment. __________
4. I think one of the most important parts of who I am can be captured by looking at my close friends and understanding who they are. __________
5. When I think of myself, I often think of my close friends or family also. __________
6. If a person hurts someone close to me, I feel personally hurt as well. __________
7. In general, my close relationships are an important part of my self-image. __________
8. Overall, my close relationships have very little to do with how I feel about myself. __________
9. My close relationships are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. __________
10. My sense of pride comes from knowing who I have as close friends. __________
11. When I establish a close friendship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person. __________
Appendix F

Assessment of Relationship Commitment Scale (Gagné & Lydon, 2003)

Please complete this scale only if you are currently in a romantic relationship. Use the scale provided to rate the following items:

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<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Completely</td>
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</table>

1. To what extent do you feel committed to your relationship right now? ______
2. To what extent are you satisfied with your relationship right now? ______
3. How invested are you in this relationship? _____
4. To what extent do you feel enthusiastic about your relationship? _____
5. To what extent do you feel attached to your partner right now? ______
6. To what extent do you feel dedicated to your relationship? ______
7. To what extent is the relationship a burden to you right now? ______
8. To what extent are you devoted to your relationship? ______
9. To what extent would it be a relief to not be in the relationship right now? ______
10. To what extent do you feel a sense of loyalty in your relationship? ______
11. To what extent do you feel that you really enjoy your relationship right now? ______
Appendix G

Relationship-Specific-Identification Scale (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011)

Please use the following scale to rate the extent to which you agree with the statements below if you are currently in a romantic relationship:

<table>
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<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My current romantic relationship is an important reflection of who I am. _____
2. When I feel very close to my romantic partner, it often feels to me like he/she is an important part of who I am. _____
3. I usually feel a strong sense of pride when my partner has an important accomplishment. _____
4. I think one of the most important parts of who I am can be captured by looking at my partner and understanding who he/she is. _____
5. When I think of myself, I often think of my partner also. _____
6. If a person hurts my partner, I feel personally hurt as well. _____
7. In general, my current romantic relationship is an important part of my self-image. _____
8. Overall, my current romantic relationship has very little to do with how I feel about myself. _____
9. My current romantic relationship is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. _____
10. My sense of pride comes from knowing who I have as a partner. _____
11. When I establish a romantic relationship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person. _____
Appendix H

The Experiences in Close Relationships (revised) Scale (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000)

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale.

<table>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. _____ I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
2. _____ I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. _____ I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
4. _____ I worry a lot about my relationships.
5. _____ My partner really understands me and my needs.
6. _____ I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
7. _____ I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
8. _____ I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
9. _____ I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
10. _____ I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
11. _____ It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
12. _____ When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
13. _____ I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
14. _____ I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
15. _____ I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
16. _____ My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
17. _____ It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
18. _____ I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
19. _____ I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
20. _____ I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
21. _____ I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. _____ I do not often worry about being abandoned.
23. _____ I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
24. _____ It makes me mad that I don’t get the affection and support that I need from my partner.
25. _____ I tell my partner just about everything.
26. _____ I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
27. _____ I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
28. _____ My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
29. _____ I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
30. _____ My partner only seems to notice me when I’m angry.
31. _____ I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
32. _____ Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
33. _____ It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
34. _____ I’m afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I really am.
35. _____ I talk things over with me partner.
36. _____ When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
Appendix I

Debriefing Form for Study 1B

Thank you for your participation in this research project! Your participation is invaluable.

At the outset of this study, we told you that its purpose was to investigate students’ social relationships. We provided you with a vague description of the study when you arrived to help avoid influencing your responses in any way. In fact, we were primarily interested in your romantic relationships, particularly in assessing your romantic relationship status disclosure (how often you typically disclose your relationship status to other people), and its association with relationship perceptions (commitment and satisfaction) and general self-disclosure.

Because we were interested in measuring how these associations naturally occur, we did not manipulate you in any way. Our aim was to describe how these relationships variables coincide to garner a better understanding of students’ romantic relationships. We predicted that undergraduates would vary in the extent to which they prefer their relationship status to be known. For example, not everyone on Facebook© discloses their relationship status. We further believed that the low disclosing group would be heterogeneous, we expected one subgroup of low disclosing participants to be equally committed but more private than the high disclosing group. We further expected another subgroup of low disclosing participants to be less committed to their romantic partner than their high disclosing counterparts with no difference in general privacy preferences.

If you would be interested in obtaining a copy of the results of this study, you may contact the primary researcher, Erin Larson, at eml.study@gmail.com. This is the first study to investigate romantic relationship status disclosure, if you have a more general interest in relationship research, you may wish to consult the following references:


As stated earlier, your responses to the questionnaire items will be confidential. This project has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies. If you feel upset as a result of your participation, you may wish to contact one of the following resources:

- Queen’s Student Counselling Service 613-533-2893
- TALK Distress & Information Line 613-544-1771
- Sexual Health Resource Centre at Queen’s 613-533-2959

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at eml.study@gmail.com or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Please do not tell other potential subjects about the purpose of this study to help us avoid contaminated results.

Thank you for your participation! Your participation is an invaluable part of psychological research. Because you completed this study, I may want to ask you to participate in future studies being conducted in this lab. Please complete the following form to either allow or prohibit invitations to participate in future research projects. If I invite you to participate in a different study, you can refuse the invitation.
Please complete the following form to either allow or prohibit invitations to participate in future research projects conducted by Erin Larson. If you are invited to participate in a different study, you will have the option to participate or not participate.

☐ I agree to be contacted about future research opportunities.

☐ I do NOT agree to be contacted about future research opportunities.

________________________________________________
Signature

Date: ______________________________________

If you agree to be contacted, please complete the following information:

Name (please print): ________________________________

Queen’s Student Number: __________________________

E-mail Address: _________________________________
Appendix J

Letter of Information for Study Two

Investigating Initial Interactions among Undergraduates across Communication Mediums

This research is being conducted by Erin Larson, graduate student. She is working with Tara MacDonald, Associate Professor, of the Department of Psychology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

What is this study about? The purpose of this research is to explore different communication mediums for initial interactions among undergraduates. As part of the study, you will be asked to engage in a “Getting to Know You” Task with another participant, either online or face-to-face. You will be assigned a role for this interaction, either to ask the questions (Questioner Condition) or to respond to the questions (Responder Condition). The questions have been scripted for the “Getting to Know You” Task. Following the interaction, you will also be asked to complete a number of questionnaires related to the “Getting to Know You” Task. You will be asked also to provide us with some background information on the final questionnaire. We are also pilot-testing a new procedure for short-term memory research. We will really appreciate if you could remember a number for the duration of the experiment and recall it on one of the post-task questionnaires. We estimate that it takes about 30 minutes to complete these tasks. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would participate in all tasks and answer all material as frankly as possible, you may decline to answer any questions or withdraw at any time if you find any material objectionable or if you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your standing in school.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this study? We do not foresee any major risks associated with your participation in this research. However, some items in the background information questionnaire are of a sensitive or personal nature and you may not feel comfortable responding to them. We remind you that you are free not to answer any questionnaires or items that you find objectionable. If you choose to omit responses to any items, you will not be penalized in any way.

What will happen to my responses? We will keep your responses confidential. We will store the data in a locked room until the raw data is no longer needed. Only experimenters in the Social Psychology Lab will have access to this area. To ensure confidentiality, your responses have been given a unique identification number, please do not put your name on any of the answer sheets. The data may also be presented in professional psychological journals or at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will be of group means and differences, not individual responses, and will never breach individual confidentiality. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

Will I be compensated for my participation? Yes. In exchange for your help, we will compensate you with 1.0 of a maximum 5.0 credits you may earn toward your final Psychology 100 grade by participating in departmental experiments. If you are not enrolled in the Psychology 100 course or have completed the maximum 5 credits for PSYC100, we will compensate you with $5 cash. If you choose to withdraw your participation, you will still receive compensation for your time.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at 11eml6@queensu.ca or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated. Please keep a copy of this information form for your records.

Dr. T. MacDonald        Erin Larson
Associate Professor     B.A.H., M.Sc. Candidate
Appendix K

Experimental Script for Study Two

Door Greeting
Hi, here for Indigo? ...... Great, I'm just going to set you up in the back room here, in the yellow chair is fine

Introduction
Thank you for attending today’s experimental session! My name's ____ and I'll be running you today, as you would have read online this study is looking at different communication mediums.

We're actually working with Queen's Community Housing on this project, Queen's is always trying to improve roommate relationships and one promising avenue is to have a summer meeting mandatory before students move in together. Our job is to see if these meetings are substantially more meaningful face-to-face or if they can take place online.

Overview
So we'll be asking you to interact with another participant and today we are running the online condition. Because of time constraints, we have scripted a set of questions for this task and they are basic getting to know you questions.

Roles: We are also assigning roles in the interaction to keep the study under 30 minutes. So you'll either be assigned to be the Questioner, in which case you will ask the questions, or you'll be assigned to be the Responder, in which case you answer the questions. We ask that the Responders don't ask questions and that the Questioners don't respond to questions. Following the interaction, there are a few measures to complete to get your impressions of the task and of your conversation partner.

Number: We're also piggy-backing another study into today's session, we're pilot-testing a procedure for a short-term memory project to see how cumbersome it is for people to remember a 3-digit area code in addition to an already 7 digit phone number. All that means for you is I'm going to give you a number to remember and we are going to see if you can recall that number at the end of the study. Because this is for a separate study, if you successfully remember your number, you will win a ballot to enter a draw for a $50 gift certificate to the bookstore.

Letter of Information/Consent
If you are interested in participating today, please take a moment to read through the letter of information here. I'll just point out that your participation is voluntary, you can decline to participate in any task, if any question makes you uncomfortable you can skip that question.

All responses will be confidential, your name isn't attached to anything you do today and all data will be kept in a secure location, and you will be compensated for your time today by receiving half a research credit.

Please take a minute to read through this information and following the letter of information, there is a consent form to complete. If you don't have any questions you can complete that but if you can have any questions, I can answer them.

I am just going to run down the hall and make sure another participant has shown up today in the other room, we've had some issues with only one person showing up and not being able to run so I'll be right back.

(walk down hallway to 308 and back while participant completes LOI and consent)

Ok we do have another participant down the hall. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Assign Role
Great, first things first we need to determine your role for the interaction and we are doing classic random assignment so please pull one slip of paper from the envelope......You have selected 'responder'. This means that you will be responding to the questions asked by another participant in the online version of the “Getting to Know You” task. Again if anything comes up and you don't want to answer you can decline and move on to the next question. I'm just going to get you logged in and make sure the computer is working.

Intro Cards: Before we get you your number to remember, we are having participants complete this introduction card so you know a little bit about who you are talking to. You will get the same back from the participant down the hall.

Ok, now I need you to pull out a number to remember, careful sometimes they stick together...ok that is your number to remember, I'll let you rehearse that while I trade the introduction cards.

(Taking the participant's card and the mock card with you, leave room, walk to 308 and back, make sure the participant only sees the mock card when you return.)

~

Final Spiel
Ok here's a little bit about who you are talking to. The other participant has the scripted questions so they will start the conversation, it should just pop up automatically, they'll also let you know when the questions are over. They were just getting their number over there so they're a little behind, but they should be logged in right away. When the conversation ends please just open the door to signal that you have completed this task and we'll move on.
(leave 304 and shut the door).

Measures
All done? Great. I just have a few measures for you to complete now. And there is space on the last page to record the number you were given.

Ballot/Debrief
Finished? Great. I'll just check to see if your number is correct...
If 8 or 83675429: oh good you remembered your number, I'll just have you complete a ballot for the draw, only the winner will be contacted and the draw should take place in March.
If wrong: oh no, not quite but that's alright.

Explain need for deception: Alright, so at the outset of the study I did lead you to believe we were working with Queen's Community Housing, that information was actually false and misleading. Often in social psychology it is necessary to conceal the true purpose of a study so people respond more naturally in a situation.
True Purpose: What we were actually looking at today was whether or not people mentioned their romantic partner while interacting online today. So everyone is assigned to be the responder and everyone is asked the same set of questions and it's actually a trained confederate asking the questions not another participant.
During prescreening you filled out a general measure assessing tendencies to discuss your relationship status and we are trying to take scores from that measure and see if they predict behaviour in this study. Again, your name is not linked to any of your responses.

Explain #: And the number we had you remember today was part of this study and was a cognitive load manipulation. Some people get an easy number to remember and other people get a hard number to remember. We're interested in understanding why some people don't mention their partner and we have competing hypotheses.
Hypotheses: On one hand, maybe not everyone thinks of their partner the same way and these questions don't prompt thoughts of your partner, we don't expect memory differences in that scenario. But we also think maybe some people think of their partner and then don't want to mention their partner so they suppress thoughts of their partner, but that takes up energy and we think they won't be able to remember the number anymore.

Contact info: But if you have any further questions about the study you can contact Erin, she is the principal researcher for this study

Don't Tell: And finally, if you could help us out by not telling anyone the true purpose of the research, that would be great as it could skew results.

Thank & Good Bye: But thank you for participating today, you should have your credit granted by the end of the day and there will be an email in a few months for that survey. Thanks and have a nice day!
Appendix L

Participant Introduction Card for Study 2

Please fill out the following introductory information for your interaction partner without revealing your name. You will receive your interaction partner’s introductory information prior to the “Getting to Know You” task.

Age: ___________

Sex (please circle one): Male  Female

Major or Intended Major: ________________

Year of Study: 1st  2nd  3rd  4th  5th +

Sample Sex Manipulation Card

Please fill out the following introductory information for your interaction partner without revealing your name. You will receive your interaction partner’s introductory information prior to the “Getting to Know You” task.

Age: 20

Sex (please circle one): Male  Female

Major or Intended Major: Psychology

Year of Study: 1st  2nd  3rd  4th  5th +
Appendix M

Instant Messaging Script for Study Two

Hey, nice to meet you.

1. **how are you finding the study so far?**
   - yeah, me too 😊
   - or
   - yeah, I think so too 😊

2. **where are you from?**
   - *If not from Kingston:* cool, I’m from rural Saskatchewan. I bet _____ *(participant’s hometown)* is way more exciting 😊
   - *If from Kingston:* cool, I’m from rural Saskatchewan. Kingston already seems way more exciting 😊

3. **how are you adjusting to university so far?**
   - *If not in first year:* How are you adjusting to university this year?

   - yeah, my year has been pretty busy so far.
   - I actually just transferred to Queen’s this year from USASK so it’s been a bit of transition for me
   - but I’m enjoying the fresh start

4. **have you been to any good movies lately?**
   - *If they mention a movie:* nice. i want to see that as well.
   - i haven’t been to a movie in such a long time
   - i really only seem to go if i’m on a date or something.
   - *If they don’t mention a movie:* yeah, me neither.
   - i haven’t been to a movie in such a long time
   - i really only seem to go if I’m on a date or something.

5. **so what sort of stuff do you do other than school?**
   - that sounds cool.
   - i’m starting to really get into photography (guitar), and I was really into ultimate frisbee (playing soccer) this past summer and plan to keep that up.
7) **have you gone out to any good restaurants lately?**
   *If mention a restaurant:* Cool, I’ll have to try that one
   *If they don’t mention a restaurant:* Yeah me neither

8) **So what do you normally do on the weekends for fun?**

9) **Are you keeping in touch with people from home?**
   *If from Kingston:* Are you keeping in touch with people with high school?

10) **hmmm… what else could I ask…**

   **oh! what was the highlight of your summer/winter break/reading week?**

11) **do you have any fun plans for winter break/summer when the term is over?**

   let’s see…what more could I tell you about me….

   oh i really enjoy traveling and I plan to go to Australia at some point in the summer or after graduation with my best friend, or maybe on my own.

12) **what would your ideal trip be and would you travel alone or is there someone you’d go with?**

   okay, the researcher says the section is over. nice chatting with you!

**Possible responses:**
- I’m going to have to get back to you on that one.
- That is a question I can’t answer at the moment.
- I don’t think we have enough time to talk about that.
- Oh sorry, I was told I was only supposed to ask questions? Not answer them?
- That’s cool 😊
- Fair enough
- That’s too bad 😞
- Yeah, I see what you’re saying
- Haha
- Yeah, I agree
- Me too
- Sounds like fun
- Yeah, I’m the same way.
- Awesome!
- Emoticons: only smile face or sad face

If they catch on or know the confederate:
- Okay, but let’s follow instructions and continue with the experiment until its completion. Is this okay with you? Thanks, we greatly appreciate it.

If they mention that paradigm is awkward, weird, unnatural etc...
- Yeah this is kind of awkward but let’s try to follow instructions
Appendix N

The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)

1. Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with your interaction partner.

2. Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with your best friend.
3. Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with *a classmate you met this fall*.

![Venn diagrams for self and other relationships with a classmate](image)

4. Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with *a friend*.

![Venn diagrams for self and other relationships with a friend](image)

5. Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with *your romantic partner*.

![Venn diagrams for self and other relationships with a romantic partner](image)
Appendix O
Debriefing Form for Study Two

Thank you for your participation in this research project! Your participation is invaluable.

At the outset of this study, we led you to believe that the purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of different communication mediums for initial interactions amongst undergraduates to help Queen’s University improve first-year roommate relationships. This information was misleading and there is no connection between the research today and Queen’s University Student Housing. Sometimes in psychological research it is necessary to conceal the true meaning of the study so that participants respond naturally to specific conditions of the research. In fact, we were interested in examining whether or not participants mentioned their romantic partner while interacting with a trained confederate of either the same- or other-sex. The initial information we provided you with was inaccurate but necessarily provided to create a real environment in the laboratory where we could evaluate the influence of participants’ general tendency to disclose their relationship status, and the sex of their interaction partner, on the likelihood of participants’ mentioning their romantic partner. Therefore, all participants were assigned to the online condition of the “Getting to Know You” task and all participants were assigned to the ‘Responder’ condition. Earlier in the year, you participated in a study that assessed your general tendencies to disclose your relationship status to other people as well as commitment. A unique identification number, that is not personally identifiable in any way, will match your responses from the current research to your responses from the first study.

During the interaction, you were asked to remember either a single or an eight-digit number. We led you to believe we were pilot-testing a new procedure for short-term memory research. This information was also misleading. This was actually a test of cognitive interference to determine if participants who avoided mentioning their partner during the interaction were mentally taxed and unable to retain the number. Since some participants received an easier number to remember, your performance on this task did not actually affect your eligibility, everyone earned a ballot for the $100 bookstore gift certificate draw. The draw will happen when data collection has concluded and the winner will be contacted via e-mail.

Based on psychological theories and past research, people who are low in relationship-specific identification, meaning they do not spontaneously think of their partner while thinking of themselves, mention their partner less when interacting with an attractive member of the opposite sex compared to people who are high in relationship-specific identification (Linardatos & Lydon, 2011). Past research has also established repeatedly that thought suppression is difficult and draining (e.g., Wegner, Schneider, Carter & White, 1987). Thus, we predict that participants, who were low in relationship status disclosure and high on commitment, would have been taxed by suppressing the mention of their romantic partner and may unintentionally “spill the beans”. We also predict that participants, who were low disclosing and had low commitment, would be less likely to think of their partner when responding to the questions, and thus, less likely to mention their partner. We also predict that this group would be even less likely to mention their partner when interacting with a member of the other sex due to their low commitment. We asked you to report the length of your romantic relationship so we could control for that variable in some analyses, and examine its effect in others.

If you would be interested in obtaining a copy of the results of this study, you may contact the primary researcher, Erin Larson, at 11eml6@queensu.ca. If you have a more general interest in this area of research, you may wish to consult the following references:


As stated earlier, your responses to the questionnaire items will be confidential. This project has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies. If you feel upset as a result of your participation, you may wish to contact one of the following resources:

Queen’s Student Counseling Service  613-533-2893
TALK Distress & Information Line  613-544-1771

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at 11eml6@queensu.ca or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Please do not tell other potential subjects about the purpose of this study to help us avoid contamination of results.

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix P
Letter of Information for Study Three
Investigating the Associations between Facebook Activity and Relationship Functioning

This research is being conducted by Erin Larson, graduate student. She is working with Tara MacDonald, Associate Professor, of the Department of Psychology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

What is this study about? This particular study is investigating associations between Facebook activity and relationship functioning. In order to participate, you will need to add the MacLab research Facebook profile (name: Mac Lab, from Kingston, Ontario, studying at Queen's University) to your own Facebook account. Because this study takes place entirely online, informed consent will be providing by friend requesting Mac Lab. Your profile will be assigned a unique identification number, only student researchers will view your most recent activity and code for content related to social relationships, no personal identifying information, including your image, will be linked to the data. Mac Lab will not interact with you in any way on Facebook only view and code your content.

In addition to providing the Mac Lab with access to your Facebook activity, you will be e-mailed a link every two weeks to complete a brief online interpersonal survey along with a unique identification code to log in with. These online surveys should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and will be sent to you over the course of the next four months. If you are in a romantic relationship, you will be asked to provide contact information for your partner to also participate if they give you permission to. Portions of the online survey will also ask you about your romantic relationship.

If you choose to participate, the study that I am running would take place entirely online and take you approximately 30 -45 minutes to complete over the next four months. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as frankly as possible, you may decline to answer any questions or withdraw at any time if you find any material objectionable or if you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your standing in school.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this study? We do not foresee any major risks associated with your participation in this research. As mentioned above, only student researchers, not faculty, will view the Facebook profiles. We also remind you that Facebook allows you to limit the audience for everything you post on Facebook and we encourage you to take advantage of this feature for anything you may not want the research project to see. Some survey items are of a sensitive or personal nature and you may not feel comfortable responding to them. We remind you that you are free not to answer any questionnaires or items that you find objectionable. If you choose to omit responses to any items, you will not be penalized in any way.

What will happen to my responses? We will keep your responses confidential. We will store the data on a password protected computer in a locked room until the raw data is no longer needed. Only experimenters in the Social Psychology Lab will have access to this area. To ensure confidentiality, your responses, as well as your Facebook activity, have been given a unique identification number. The data may also be presented in professional psychological journals or at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will be of group means and differences, not individual responses, and will never breach individual confidentiality. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

Will I be compensated for my participation? Yes. In exchange for your help, we will compensate you with 1.0 of a maximum 5.0 credits you may earn toward your final Psychology 100 grade by participating in departmental experiments. If you are not enrolled in the Psychology 100 course or have completed the maximum 5 credits for
PSYC100, we will compensate you with $5 cash. If you choose to withdraw your participation, you will still receive compensation for your time.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at e.m.larson@queensu.ca or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated. Please keep a copy of this information form for your records.

Dr. T. MacDonald          Erin Larson
Associate Professor       B.A.H., M.Sc. Candidate
Appendix Q

Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendricks, 1988)

Please select the letter for each item which best answers that item for you. If you are currently involved in more than one dating relationship, please respond to the items while referring to the person you feel most attached to.

How well does your partner meet your needs?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Poorly       Average       Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Unsatisfied       Average       Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Poor       Average       Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn’t gotten in this relationship?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Never       Average       Very often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Hardly at all       Average       Completely

How much do you love your partner?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Not much       Average       Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?
A       B       C       D       E       F       G
Very few       Average       Very many

NOTE: Items 4 and 7 are reverse scored. A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F = 6, G=7. You add up the items and divide by 7 to get a mean score.
Appendix R

Schematic of Facebook Profile
Appendix S

Debriefing Form for Study Three

‘Facebook’ Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in this research project! Your participation is invaluable.

At the outset of this study, we told you that its purpose was to investigate associations between Facebook activity and relationship functioning. We provided you with a vague description of the study at the outset to help avoid influencing your responses in any way. In fact, we were primarily interested in your dating status and romantic relationships, particularly in assessing your romantic relationship status disclosure (how often and in which manner, you typically disclose your relationship status to other people), and its association with relationship perceptions (commitment and satisfaction). We were primarily interested in your relationship status on Facebook and any changes incurred over the duration of the study, as well as any representations of your dating status (single, in a relationship, etc.) you made in your status updates, profile pictures, and cover photos.

Because we were interested in measuring how these associations naturally occur, we did not manipulate you in any way. Our aim was to describe how these relationships variables coincide to garner a better understanding of how students navigate their relationship status and romantic relationships within an online social network. We predicted that people scoring higher on relationship status disclosure would post more relational representations on Facebook than people who score lower on relationship status disclosure. We also predicted that when high disclosers transitioned from single status to dating status or from dating status to single status, they would disclose this information on Facebook faster than low disclosers would. We further predicted that for participants currently in a romantic relationship, their relationship satisfaction and commitment levels would be influenced by how similar their own and their partner’s relationship status disclosure level were.

If you would be interested in obtaining a copy of the results of this study, you may contact the primary researcher, Erin Larson, at e.m.larson@queensu.ca. This study is one of the first studies to investigate romantic relationship status disclosure and Facebook activity, if you have a more general interest in relationship research, you may wish to consult the following references:


As stated earlier, your responses to the questionnaire items will be confidential. This project has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen’s policies. If you feel upset as a result of your participation, you may wish to contact one of the following resources:

Queen’s Student Counselling Service 613-533-2893
TALK Distress & Information Line 613-544-1771
Sexual Health Resource Centre at Queen’s 613-533-2959

Any questions about study participation may be directed to the researcher investigator, Erin Larson, at eml.study@gmail.com or 613 533-6000 x74027. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.
## Appendix T

Study 1B Analyses with Alternative Three-Factor Solution

### Table 14
*Summary of Intercorrelations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for All Participants (N = 90)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Status</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Self-Construal</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

### Table 15
*Summary of Intercorrelations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for Single Participants (n = 44)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>-.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Self-Construal</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.38*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
Table 16

Summary of Intercorrelations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for Dating Participants (n = 46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.32*</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.36*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Self-Construal</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship-Specific Identification</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01
### Table 17
*Summary of Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution Regressions on Total Partner Mentions (N = 71)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Mentions</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Attitude</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance is denoted in boldface.

### Table 18
*Summary of Anovas Comparing each of the RSD Factors across Earliest Mention Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Mentions (n = 8)</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mentions (n = 20)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Mentions (n = 15)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Mentions (n = 28)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N = 71)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( F(3,67) )</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( p )</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 19
*Summary of Regressions on Total Partner Mentions with Sex Manipulation (-1 = same sex, 1 = other-sex) and each of the RSD factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>Sex Manipulation</th>
<th>Factor by Sex Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance is denoted in boldface.*
### Appendix V
Study 3 Analyses with Alternative Three-Factor Solution

#### Table 20
**Summary of Inter-Scale Correlations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for All Participants (N = 67)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Status</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05, **p < .01

#### Table 21
**Summary of Intercorrelations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for Single Participants (n = 33)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>-.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest In Dating</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05, **p < .001

#### Table 22
**Summary of Intercorrelations for Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Three-Factor Solution for Dating Participants (n = 26)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.44*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Assessment</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05, **p < .001
Table 23
**Summary of Regressions Predicting Relationship-Relevant Facebook Status Updates from each of Three Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Factors and Dating Status (-1 = Not Dating, 1 = Dating) (Study 3, n = 58)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Factor by Dating Status Interaction</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td><strong>.02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Significance is denoted in boldface.

Table 24
**Summary of Regressions Predicting Relationship-Relevant Facebook Posts from each of the Three Relationship Status Disclosure (RSD) Factors and Dating Status (-1 = Not Dating, 1 = Dating) (Study 3, n = 58)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Factor by Dating Status Interaction</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td><strong>3.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>.003</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Significance is denoted in boldface.

Table 25
**Attitude Factor and Dating Status Predicting Profile Picture Content (n = 58)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Attitude x Status Interaction</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $p \leq .05$ is denoted in boldface.
Figure 5. Proportion of family profile pictures as a function of relationship status disclosure attitude and interest in dating for single participants.

Table 26
Conceal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Profile Picture Content (n = 58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Conceal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>-2.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $p \leq .05$ is denoted in boldface.

Table 27
Reveal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Profile Picture Content (n = 58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Reveal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $p \leq .05$ is denoted in boldface.
Figure 6. Proportion of family profile pictures as a function of conceal and interest in dating for single participants.

Figure 7. Proportion of family profile pictures as a function of reveal and interest in dating for single participants.
Table 28
Attitude Factor and Dating Status Predicting Cover Photo Content (n = 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Attitude x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.76</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Table 29
Conceal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Cover Photo Content (n = 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Conceal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.76</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Table 30
Reveal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Cover Photo Content (n = 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Reveal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.
Table 31
Summary of Zero-Order Correlations to Follow-up on Marginal Interactions for Cover Photo Family Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Cover Photos</th>
<th>Not Dating (n = 31)</th>
<th>Dating (n = 22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSD Attitude</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Conceal</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSD Reveal</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Table 32
Attitude Factor and Dating Status Predicting Uploaded Photo Content (n = 48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Attitude x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

Table 33
Conceal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Uploaded Photo Content (n = 48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Conceal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.
### Table 34

*Reveal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Uploaded Photo Content (n = 48)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Reveal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

### Table 35

*Attitude Factor and Dating Status Predicting Tagged Photo Content (n = 47)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Attitude</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Attitude x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

### Table 36

*Conceal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Tagged Photo Content (n = 47)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSD Conceal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Conceal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.*
### Table 37
**Reveal Factor and Dating Status Predicting Tagged Photo Content (n = 47)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Reveal</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Reveal x Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic Partner</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.189</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.52</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. p ≤ .05 is denoted in boldface.

### Table 38
**Summary of Regressions Predicting “Interested In” from each of the Three Relationship Status Disclosure Factors and Dating Status (-1 = Not Dating, 1 = Dating) (n = 58)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Factor by Dating Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td><strong>.34</strong></td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td><strong>.01</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance is denoted in boldface.

### Table 39
**Summary of Regressions Predicting Facebook Relationship Status Disclosure from each of the Three Relationship Status Disclosures Factors and Dating Status (-1 = Not Dating, 1 = Dating) (n = 57)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSD Factor</th>
<th>Dating Status</th>
<th>Factor by Dating Status Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td><strong>.34</strong></td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td><strong>.01</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceal</td>
<td><strong>.32</strong></td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td><strong>.02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reveal</td>
<td><strong>.26</strong></td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td><strong>.05</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significance is denoted in boldface.
Appendix W

Research Ethics Board Letter of Approval, Study 1A/Study1B/Study Two

October 28, 2011

Ms. Erin M. Larson
Graduate Student
Department of Psychology
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GPSYC-543-11; Romeo # 6006281
Title: "GPSYC-543-11 Relationship Status Disclosure, Associated Correlates, Behaviours, and Moderators"

Dear Ms. Larson:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GPSYC-543-11 Relationship Status Disclosure, Associated Correlates, Behaviours, and Moderators" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvinge@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Tara MacDonald, Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Leandre Fabrigar, Chair, Unit REB
Marie Tookey, Dept. Admin.
Appendix X

Research Ethics Board Letter of Approval – Study Three

January 10, 2014

Ms. Erin M. Larson
Master’s Student
Department of Psychology
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GPSYC-644-13; Romeo # 6011639
Title: "GPSYC-644-13 Relationship Status Disclosure, Facebook Activity and Relationship Satisfaction and Outcome"

Dear Ms. Larson:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GPSYC-644-13 Relationship Status Disclosure, Facebook Activity and Relationship Satisfaction and Outcome" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D 1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. Tara MacDonald, Faculty Supervisor
   Dr. Stanka Fitneva, Chair, Unit REB
   Ms. Marie Tookey, Dept. Admin.