RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A Look Back…

by Dan Perlman
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Time flies over us but leaves its shadow behind.
-Nathanial Hawthorne

As this will be my last column as IARR President, it is time to take stock, express thanks, and look forward to IARR's Biennial Conference in Melbourne, July 10 – 13. Overall the last two years have been a period of success for IARR.

Conferences. IARR conferences are consistently among the best. The 2012 Conference in Chicago upheld that tradition getting excellent ratings in an evaluation survey completed by attendees. Due to higher than expected attendance and the organizing committee's excellent management, revenues exceeded expenditures. With that surplus, IARR entered the 2012-2014 biennial period in the strongest financial state it has enjoyed to date.

In October 2013 Michael Cunningham and Anita Barbee hosted a stimulating conference on Multi-Level Motivations in Close Relationship Dynamics at the University of Louisville. In conjunction with that conference, the Mentoring Committee, ably chaired by Jen Theiss, arranged a pre-conference professional development day.

Under Sue Sprecher's able leadership, the Future Conferences Committee has now set the stage for three conferences:

- A mini-conference on Relationships, Health, and Wellness will be held in New Jersey June 19-21, 2015 (Jennifer Theiss and Kathryn Greene, Rutgers University, Organizers)
- A mini-conference on "Self-regulation and Close Relationships" will be held in the Netherlands July 9-11, 2015 (Catrin Finkenauer, Francesca Righetti and Tila Pronk, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Organizers)
- The 2016 Biennial Conference of the International Association for Relationship Research will be held July 20 - 24 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada (Geoff MacDonald, Emily Impett, and SiSi Tran, University of Toronto, Organizers). For more information on these conferences, see the Announcements on page 20.

Finances. Under the Chairpersonship of Secretary-Treasurer Leah Bryant, a reconstituted Finance Committee (Chris Agnew, Bob Milardo, and Sue Sprecher) reviewed IARR's financial situation and decided to move some of IARR's funds from a savings account to a balanced mutual fund. In the summer of 2013, the Board also authorized some expenditures to help IARR more fully achieve its goals. The major commitment was to make approximately 50 awards to cover the cost of conference registrations (value = $19,000 USD) to students attending the Melbourne Conference.

Historical and Administrative Archives. To foster effective organizational functioning and preserve aspects of IARR's history, IARR Board member Susan Boon established an IARR archive (see http://www.iarr.org/document-archive/). Susan had advice from Rosemary Blieszner, Jacki Fitzpatrick and Sandra Petronio and web help from Ben Le. The archive has both a public section with organizational milestones and an administrative section for IARR officers. With Board members and Committee chairs typically changing every two years, it is important to have a repository of organizational memory including dates, practices, forms and the like. Having this information will help incoming officers get oriented toward their responsibilities and help IARR avoid pitfalls.

Teaching Committee. Kelly Campbell led a Teaching Committee, IARR's first. The Committee has already accomplished a lot, especially creating a web area. It contains sample syllabi, a listing of texts, classic readings, media for teaching, a listing of IARR's Teaching Award recipients, and sources that offer awards to recognize outstanding teaching and/or provide funds to support research on teaching and learning.

IARR's Website. The value of the previous two initiatives were greatly increased because of the IARR website. One of the many good things Past-President Chris Agnew did for IARR was to appoint Ben Le as the IARR Webmaster in the spring of 2012 before the rotation of officers. Ben, with help from the Science of Relationship team, revamped the website and relaunched it just as the current set of officers' terms began. Ben has continued enhancing the website throughout the time since.

Publications. With an Advances Book Series, ownership of *Personal Relationships*, and an advisory role for Sage's *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* (JSPR), publications are a key area of IARR activity (John Caughlin, Publication Committee Chair). During the past two years, IARR's publications keet humming along. That included negotiating contractual agreements with Sage and Cambridge University Press, overseeing the editorial transitions for the Advances Book Series, an upcoming JSPR editorial change, and the like. Chris Agnew accepted a 3-year term as the Advances Series Editor. In the Advances Series, IARR is proud of Renate Klein's (2012) *Responding to Intimate Violence Against Women: The Role of Informal Networks* and is looking forward in the fall to Chris Agnew's *Social Influences on Romantic Relationships*. Justin Lehmiller has assumed the editorship of *Relationship Research News* and is in the process of innovating its format to be more in line with contemporary electronic communications. Terri Orbuch is chairing an ad hoc committee to discuss ways IARR might facilitate dissemination of relationship science knowledge to the public.

Membership. The Membership Committee, chaired by Rozzana Sánchez Aragón, has translated information about IARR into multiple languages. That will help IARR better achieve its goal of being an international association.

International Emphasis. Complementing the multilingual thrust of the Membership Committee, the International Committee (Gery Karantzas, Chair) conducted semi-structured interviews with members living outside North America. The key issues identified were: (1) the ability to network with international scholars in similar regions as well as other regions – with such networking potentially enhancing cross-national and cross-cultural collaborations; (2) strategies and tips to enhance publication success in the two IARR journals; and (3) developing a stronger emphasis on relationship research that integrates cultural perspectives.

Media. The Media Committee (Bjarne Holmes, Chair) has successfully promoted the work of several IARR members, helping to get their findings and ideas into esteemed media outlets such as NBC News, CBS Morning Show, New York Times, Washington Post, National Public Radio, and Canadian Public Radio. Bjarne Holmes' *Relationship Matters* JSPR podcasts, sponsored by Sage, have garnered over 15,000 listeners.

Tasks Needing Further Attention. As I look at IARR's situation, I see some tasks currently warranting further attention. These include: (1) reducing the fluctuation in the size of IARR's membership by better retaining members following well-attended conferences, (2) further fine tuning IARR's budgeting procedures consistent with IARR's larger size of operation, being deeply thankful that IARR's finances have worked very well in the past, and (3) reviewing the goals of the IARR website to consider its purpose and audience (e.g., primarily IARR members vs. a broader audience).

Melbourne. The highlight of IARR's 2014 will be the Melbourne Conference. The Local Arrangements (Gery Karantzas, Chair) and Program Committees (Rebecca Pinkus, Chair) have been working to insure that Melbourne has the key ingredients we desire: a program packed with cutting edge and exciting research, opportunities for networking, and a dash of academic tourism. Being in Melbourne in person is best; however, as a first for IARR Conferences, the

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RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

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Relationship Research News is published twice a year. Contributions are very welcome and will be published as space permits. Announcements, letters to the editors, cartoons/humor, teaching tips, and other information relevant to IARR members are all appropriate. If you would like to contribute a feature article or personal commentary, please submit a brief (one paragraph) description to the editor first (please do not send manuscripts). Submit all materials to Justin Lehmiller, Harvard University, Department of Psychology, 33 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA, USA, 02138; justin.lehmiller@gmail.com. The deadlines for final copy are October 1 and April 1. Inquiries regarding Feature Articles are welcome at any time.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

by Justin Lehmiller
Harvard University

As mentioned in the previous issue, I have been in discussions with the IARR board about making some changes to the format and distribution of RRN. We came to the conclusion that our starting point should be a survey of how IARR members feel about and use the newsletter. To that end, I created a brief online survey that was sent out earlier this year as part of the monthly IARR Announcements email (this announcement was sent out twice in order to increase participation rates). Here are the main results:

The survey link went to all active members (approximately 330), of whom 58 completed the survey (a response rate of 18%). About half of the respondents (45%) had been IARR members for ten or more years. In addition, most identified as faculty (66%) or student (31%), with the most common disciplines represented being psychology (50%), communication (33%), and family studies (9%).

Everyone reported having read RRN previously (except for a handful of members who were too new to the organization to have received any issues) and 94% reported that they read at least some content in every issue. The vast majority reported positive perceptions of RRN, seeing it as a valuable professional resource with interesting and enjoyable content. Feature articles on teaching, research, and professional issues had the highest positive ratings (80-90% of respondents said that they were at least somewhat useful), while tables of contents for upcoming journals and book reviews had the highest negative ratings (36-38% of respondents said that they were not useful).

In terms of readership habits, 78% said they currently read RRN on paper, while 22% read it electronically. However, when asked for their delivery preference, 80% said that they prefer electronic delivery. When asked whether they would be more or less likely to read RRN if the print version were discontinued and RRN was delivered electronically only, 71% said it would make no difference, 10% said they would be less likely to read it, and 18% said they would be more likely to read it.

Finally, in terms of publishing considerations, 98% agreed that producing high quality content is important, 78% agreed that monetary cost considerations to the society and to members are important, 72% agreed that delivering RRN in an environmentally conscious way is important, 56% agreed that delivering issues in a timely manner is important, and 40% agreed that producing attractive and visually appealing issues is important.

The response rate to the survey was certainly lower than I would have liked, and it is unclear whether the views expressed are representative of the society as a whole. However, I was heartened to see that among those who responded, RRN was viewed very favorably. Also, I saw little in these results to suggest that changes in RRN content are in order.

As far as changing the distribution method for RRN, these results suggest that most members prefer electronic delivery; however, we must be mindful of the fact that this survey was sent out and conducted electronically and therefore may overestimate interest in an e-newsletter. The board and I will continue our discussions in light of these results and the survey's limitations as we finalize our plans for the future format of RRN.

My sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the survey and to everyone who contributed to the current issue of RRN. Associate Editors Amy Muise, Deb Mashek, and Jessica Eckstein generated some fascinating content! Please check out this issue's feature articles, as well as our regular columns by Dan Perlman, Kendra Knight, and Dave Kenny.

In the spirit of full disclosure, one of the books reviewed in this issue is a text I authored (*The Psychology of Human Sexuality*) that I think will be of interest to relationship scientists; however, I did not select the reviewer or coordinate the review itself.

Happy reading!

-Justin

FEATURE ARTICLES

Writing Good Reviews: Advice from IARR Journal Editors

by Debra Mashek
Harvey Mudd College

Scholars who publish in peer-reviewed journals benefit from the perspectives of (often) anonymous colleagues who point out hiccups in our logic, suggest alternate frames of understanding, and challenge our interpretation of statistics. On the flip side, many of us have also received at least one cryptic or clueless review over the years that rendered the feedback essentially useless.

Of course, we've all been called upon to serve as reviewers, too. Presuming we'd like the time and effort we invest in writing a review to result in a useful—rather than useless—piece of feedback, it is worth reflecting on the qualities of a good review and thinking about how one learns to write them.

This column highlights a great source of advice about how to write good reviews: the journal editors who rely on these reviews when making judgments about which manuscripts to publish. We invited editors of journals dedicated to publishing research on relationships to share their thoughts about the characteristics of the best and worst reviews, as well as strategies for becoming a stronger reviewer.

Best Reviews
Most importantly, the best reviews are at once specific, constructive, and directive. Mario Mikulincer, the Editor of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, notes that the best reviews offer "clear and coherent comments that focus on specific problems of the manuscript or study and provide useful and constructive suggestions to the authors about how to deal with the problem in the current manuscript/study or further studies."

Similarly, Gurit Birnbaum, a past Associate Editor for *Personal Relationships*, observes "a good review does not leave the authors frustrated or humiliated, even if the decision is not the one they hoped for, because the authors can get an independent, objective, fresh, and respectful perspective on their work in a way that really helps them improve it…This means that a helpful review should be both constructive and instructive and emphasize the major contribution of the research as well as its major weaknesses. The comments should deal with all major parts of the paper and relate to the unique theoretical contribution, clarity of the conceptualization and the rationale, and methodological and analytical concerns. The review should instruct the authors very specifically how to advance their paper (e.g., presentation of the rationale, appropriateness of the analyses and additional analyses, the need for more data and the nature of the required data)."

Having said that, Julie Fitness, the Editor of *Personal Relationships*, notes how important it is "that reviewers do not include a recommendation about publishing a manuscript. You may believe a paper is ground-breaking and should be published immediately, but other reviewers may have different views, and it is the editor's job to make the final decision. Giving your own recommendation about publication can make it more difficult for authors to accept the editor's final decision if it is contrary to a reviewer's opinion".

Fitness also notes that a good review makes it clear to the authors that their paper has been carefully read and deeply considered. A review that accuses authors of not having done what they did in fact do loses credibility; it suggests a skim read only, rather than a thoughtful engagement with a paper. A good review demonstrates respect for the authors and their research objectives; it is encouraging, points out strengths, and clearly describes problems and weaknesses.

Worst Reviews
Reviews that leave editors and authors wanting tend to be too vague, too lop-sided, too critical, or just plain wrong. Birnbaum comments, "The most frustrating reviewers are those who take their work too lightly and either write comments that are too general and incomprehensible or relate only to very specific parts of the paper (e.g., results) and ignore the rest". This doesn't mean that reviewers have to be experts in every aspect of the paper under review,

however; as Fitness adds, "a particular reviewer may be assigned because they have special expertise in complex data analytic procedures, or in qualitative methodology; they may not be experts in the field of study or have a detailed knowledge of the background literature. That's fine – they should note the aspects of the paper about which they have limited knowledge, and concentrate on the areas where they have particular expertise. With luck, the editor will receive a mix of reviews that together, provide an informed and useful evaluation of the paper."

Birnbaum notes other frustrating cases are reviewers with an agenda, whose hidden motives bias their judgments. Specific incidents she mentioned included "reviewers who gave extremely positive (and shallow) feedback about a very problematic paper, which left me wondering whether we read the same paper." Mikulincer concurs that "very positive or very negative reviews without any coherent explanation of the recommendation as well as criticisms that don't provide any constructive suggestions to the authors" lack the utility one hopes to foster in the peer-review process. Fitness has also received "blistering reviews that are clearly an excuse for a reviewer to vent their spleen about a particular theoretical orientation, methodological approach, or even (assumed) author. These kinds of reviews may make a disgruntled reviewer feel better but they are of no use to an editor (or author)." Clearly, caustic reviews are not helpful.

Fitness notes that some reviewers also submit reviews in which they "simply list typos and perceived grammatical errors (and I've received reviews where the most grammatically prescriptive author provides the least coherent feedback)." It is worth mentioning that accepted papers will go through copyediting anyway; your time is better spent exercising your theoretical and methodological expertise. Fitness advises reviewers "to provide feedback on the bigger picture: Is the paper theoretically strong? Has the most relevant literature been used to frame the research question? Is the research novel and important? Do the hypotheses make sense, given the arguments made to support them in the Introduction? Is the methodology appropriate for investigating the research question? Do the results mean what the authors say they mean, or are there competing explanations? Does the Discussion pick up potential limitations of the research, and have the authors been careful not to go beyond their data when discussing its implications? And most importantly, when answering these questions, provide evidence for your conclusions - explain *why* you believe the literature review is too sketchy, or the Method too weak, or the theoretical framework is shaky. Simply noting that a paper is 'really interesting and I like it' is not a helpful review!"

And, any reflection on the worst reviews would be incomplete without at least passing mention of timeliness. If you accept a review assignment, get your review in at least roughly on time. It is extremely frustrating for authors and editors to be waiting for promised reviews. If you know you're going to be late submitting a review, tell the editor up front when accepting the assignment or e-mail the editor as soon as it becomes clear that you will need extra time. Editors appreciate the transparency and it helps them figure out if they need a contingency in place (e.g., contacting an alternate reviewer).

Becoming a Stronger Reviewer

Concretely, then, what can we do as reviewers to improve the quality of our reviews?

First, think about review writing as a mentorship-worthy activity. If you are a graduate student or post-doc and have not received any mentorship on how to review manuscripts, ask for it. If you advise graduate students and/or post-docs and don't already involve these new scholars in your review activities, consider requesting permission from your action editors to give these students some mentored experiences in this critical professional development activity. After you both read a manuscript, sit down to co-create the review, or invite the junior scholar to draft the review (after showing her or him a couple stellar examples from your files) and then work together to revise the document before submitting it.

Fitness notes that she has had such requests from time to time and always welcomes such reviews from new scholars – they are frequently very thoughtful and incisive contributions. But she also asks that "if mentors invite a relatively inexperienced student or post-doc to review a paper, read over the review before it is submitted, and help the reviewer learn the conventions of good review writing. Some reviews I have received have had to be quietly jettisoned, because they just didn't make the grade on any measure, and would have given the submitting authors conniptions. Of course, this is not a problem confined to new and/or inexperienced scholars – but at least the latter have an excuse."

Second, there are some useful online sources of advice. For example, check out Henry L. Roediger, III's (2007) Twelve Tips for Reviewers and Lovejoy, Revenson, and France's (2011) article titled *Reviewing manuscripts for peer-review journals: A primer for novice and seasoned reviewers*. Full citations to these sources appear below.

Third, read others' reviews and think critically about what works and what doesn't in these documents. Birnbaum points out that scholars can, "ask editors to send you several published papers, write a review and then compare your review to the reviews of more experienced scholars (ask the editor to send you several examples)." She also recommends that you "write a review which you would have been happy to receive, regardless of the recommendation. Do not insult the authors and genuinely appreciate their efforts, even if you think that their paper should not be accepted for publication." Indeed, Fitness shared that she and her Associate Editors have "frequently received positive feedback from authors whose papers have been rejected, but who wanted to express their appreciation of the care and attention that had clearly gone into the reviewing process. This is a special acknowledgement of the kind of constructive, helpful reviewing that provides a clear direction for authors as they develop their research".

And, of course, anyone who has written a peer review eventually receives access to others' reviews and to the editor's action letter. "After receiving the editor decision letter, read it very carefully to see whether your comments were relevant and cover the main points raised by the editor and the other reviewers," suggests Birnbaum, "Learn from this process so that your next reviews will be more polished."

Finally, try to take an emotionally detached look at the reviews you have received of your work. Try to pinpoint what sort of comments you found helpful and what sort felt perhaps more cutting than constructive. Try to emulate the good qualities, while steering clear of the bad -- both in terms of content and tone.

Closing Thoughts

Our field values the peer-review process, and editors and authors value good reviews. "The bottom line," says Birnbaum, "is that the authors can truly learn from this process how to do better research and how to communicate their ideas more effectively."

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The State of LGBTQ-Inclusive Research Methods in Relationship Science and How We Can Do Better

by Karen Blair
University of Utah

Although research in general has come a long way in being more inclusive with respect to studying topics of relevance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) populations, more work remains to be done in many areas of science, including close relationships research. To that end, I recently decided to get a sense of just how inclusive relationships scientists are in this regard in their research practices. In this article I report what I found and propose several concrete strategies for how the field of close relationships can implement more inclusive research methods.

Use of LGBTQ-Inclusive Research Methods in Relationship Research

The large majority of close relationships articles that come across my desk, either in a published journal or for review, still rely on exclusively heterosexual samples. Many of these articles fail to mention the sexual identity or orientation of the participants, leaving it to the reader to assume that the participants are likely heterosexual, or at least reporting on mixed-sex relationships. When the article is one that I'm reviewing, I often ask the authors to include sexual orientation as one of the demographics that they report in their paper and also ask them to explain why their sample only includes heterosexuals, if that is indeed the case. More often than not, of the three or four reviewers to send in comments on the paper, none of the other reviewers will have asked these questions. Usually the authors indulge me by adjusting their participant section to reflect that they used only heterosexuals (or indicate that they didn't exactly ask about sexual orientation, but claim that the questions used in the study were really only appropriate for heterosexuals, which means the participants are more than likely heterosexual) and then add a line to their limitations section stating that future research should examine these very same issues in a more diverse sample including individuals in same-sex relationships. This strategy is not consistent with inclusive research practices, and as a field, I think we can do better.

But first, I wanted to get a sense of LGBTQ inclusivity in the broader field (as opposed to just the articles that cross my desk). Perhaps a better opportunity to get a current snapshot of the field's practices is by examining poster presentations in the area of close relationships at a large conference, such as the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology's* (SPSP) Annual Meeting. The advantage of examining poster presentations is that they tend to be report recently conducted research and provide a sampling of studies that have already been published, those in the process of being published, and those that may never be published (either because they are rejected or because publication isn't pursued). After all, not all research gets published, and even when it does, it is often years after the initial study was designed. Consequently, a survey of the most recently published close relationships journal articles might only provide a 'snapshot' of the research practices that were prevalent several years ago.

As any good relationships researcher would, I spent my Valentine's Day perusing a close relationships poster session. This one happened to be at the SPSP meeting in Texas. (That is how I was supposed to spend Valentine's Day, right? Flowers, dinner, chocolates, jewelry, posters…). I had visited 58 of the 71 posters that were listed in the program – I missed one or two, but many posters were absent due to snow and ice storms that interfered with many attendees' travel plans. While I walked around viewing the posters, I took notes on the demographics included on each poster presentation and I'm going to share with you the results of my 'mini-analysis.' This is, of course, only a small snapshot of the research in the area of close relationships and is not representative of ALL close relationships researchers or ALL disciplines, but nonetheless, it does give us a peak into what the social and personality psychologists who study close relationships (and who present their work at SPSP) are currently doing in their labs.

Results of My Mini-Analysis

Of the 58 posters that I viewed, 45 of them had topics concerning romantic relationships. The remaining posters were focused on topics such as parent-child relationships, friendships or stranger interactions and were not included in this analysis. Of these, only 15.5% of the studies stated that LGBTQ participants were included. Of these, one study was specifically focused on LGBTQ participants, two studies made comparisons based on sexual identity or relationship type, and 5 studies indicated what percentage of their sample identified as LGBTQ.

Across these same 45 studies, 24.4% included sexual orientation demographic information, while 75.6% of the posters presented in the Close Relationships poster section of SPSP made no mention whatsoever of the sexual orientation or gender identities of the participants.

Among the 24.4% of posters that included sexual orientation demographics, the majority were studies that had included LGBTQ participants. Only four studies indicated that participants were heterosexual or in mixed-sex relationships (often termed "opposite-sex" relationships) – the rest left the question to our imaginations!

Two studies specifically excluded LGBTQ participants, either as part of the selection criteria for the study or in a post-hoc manner by dropping the data from the analyses. For various reasons, I tend to prefer the latter method, if either is to be used, given that it avoids the process of LGBTQ individuals facing explicit rejection from researchers through signs like “Heterosexual Couples Needed for Research” or exclusion messages within the survey, such as “we’re sorry, you do not qualify for this study” (after indicating that they are not heterosexual). Of course not every single study can afford to use inclusive research methods. Sometimes it simply is not theoretically, practically, or financially viable to conduct a study that includes people of different sexual orientations, such as when you are examining a very specific topic and using a very expensive method (e.g., an MRI protocol). But, in the vast majority of cases it would require little extra cost or time to make studies (or at least the reporting of studies) inclusive.

Only 13.3%, or 6 studies, qualified as LGBTQ inclusive, in that the studies included participants of multiple sexual orientations and did not exclusively focus on the experiences of a single sexual orientation or group of orientations.

Five studies indicated that they were using newlywed participants. Of these, only one indicated the sexual orientation of the participants (heterosexual), while the others seemed to imply this by using the term, “newlywed.” In 2014, we are long beyond the point of reserving “newlywed” only for mixed-sex couples. Same-sex marriage has been legal in parts of the world since the year 2000, and in parts of North America for more than a decade. In other words, the term newlywed has been applicable to same-sex couples for at least 14 years, and yet, within the close relationships field, it still appears as a term that is largely applied to mixed-sex couples. Using “newlywed” to describe your sample does not excuse you from the need to specify the sexual identity of your participants.

None of the studies considered the role of gender identity. In one study, the authors mentioned excluding individuals who did not identify as either male or female and, in another study, the authors indicated that additional data related to trans* experiences had been collected, but not yet analyzed.

Conclusions About the State of LGBTQ Inclusivity in Relationship Research

Overall, I find two troubling conclusions that can be drawn from this information:

1. The majority of close relationships studies presented at this particular poster session excluded LGBTQ participants and focused on the experiences of those in mixed-sex relationships. Also, mixed-sex relationships were often referred to as “opposite-sex” relationships, a term that reinforces a binary understanding of gender.

2. The majority of close relationships studies presented at this poster session did not deem sexual orientation or identity a relevant demographic characteristic worth reporting. Of the 75.6% of the studies that did not mention sexual orientation, we are left to guess who might have been in their sample. Either the researchers themselves do not know who was in the sample because they did not ask, or they excluded LGBTQ participants and chose not to provide this information when presenting their research.

The fact that demographic information is vital for understanding the context and generalizability of research findings did not appear to be lost on the majority of presenters, who, by and large, reported many other pieces of demographic information about their samples: ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, relationship status. Given that the posters I reviewed were focused on romantic relationships, it is likely that sexual orientation and identity would have been particularly relevant. It’s also important to remember that just because a researcher recruits a sample of individuals in seemingly heterosexual relationships, participants may not all identify as heterosexual. A large number of individuals in mixed-sex relationships may identify as bisexual, and in fact, some may even identify as lesbian or gay. In my own research, I invariably end up with a handful of lesbians dating men, a handful of gay men dating women, and many handfuls of bisexual men and women currently in mixed-sex relationships. Yes, people occasionally check off an incorrect box resulting in a categorization error, but when I dig deeper into my data and examine the qualitative answers alongside the quantitative, more often than not, I find that seeming inconsistencies between sexual identity and relationship behavior are not a mistake—this is just who they are: they identify as a lesbian, but they are dating a man, or even married to one – possibly even a newlywed! It might seem messy (and we hate messy data) but relationships are messy. Humans are messy. If we want to understand the close relationships of humans, we must allow our data to be messy and we must ask the questions that will give us all of the details we need to truly discover the inner workings of relationships.

Explanations for the Lack of LGBTQ Inclusivity

How did it come to be that 75.6% of the studies presented in the close relationships poster session at SPSP did not include information about the sexual orientation/identity of their participants? There are at least four possible scenarios:

1. They didn't ask about sexual orientation/identity:
    a. This could mean that they are assuming everyone is heterosexual, or;
    b. They are assuming that sexual orientation is irrelevant to their subject of study and that whatever a person's sexual orientation may be, the study questions and procedures will be appropriate. This scenario could either be very progressive or fatally flawed.

2. They excluded non-heterosexuals before they even made it into the study:
    a. Such exclusion perpetuates heteronormativity and the day-to-day social exclusion of LGBTQ individuals that already exists. And not only that, but it goes against the ethical guidelines laid out by many institutions and funding agencies.
    b. There are cases where exclusion is warranted. In these cases, it can go a long way to explicitly state your case. For example, one might say: "We restricted our sample to 20-25 year old heterosexual males given the high cost of using the MRI machine for each participant and because we wanted to limit the number of confounds in this exploratory study."

3. They allowed LGBTQ participants to complete the study, asked them about their sexual identity, but then dropped them from their analyses – and didn't tell anyone!
    a. This is better than the "No Gays Allowed" approach to participant recruitment, but the information should still be shared with your readers (as was done by only one poster – which stated that XX were dropped from the analysis for sexual orientation and XX were dropped for gender identity). Even still, it is good to provide a rationale as to WHY they were dropped, beyond simply stating the demographics of who was dropped. As a parallel, it is not uncommon to see percentages in the high 90s when researchers outline how many of their participants were White (that's a whole other issue!) – but they usually don't go to the next line and state "5% were dropped due to being African American, 5% were dropped due to being Latino."

4. They asked about sexual orientation/identity, but they just didn't include it on their poster.
    a. This is just a matter of leaving out relevant information, which is likely exacerbated by the limited amount of space available on a conference poster. It is possible that they analyzed the sample as a whole, it is possible that they dropped the LGBTQ participants, or it is possible that they compared groups and just didn't report the information. The bottom line is that we just don't know because the information wasn't shared – yet this is important information that researchers need to share, and can be done without stealing a great deal of space on a poster presentation.

How Can We Do Better?

It would appear from my mini-analyses that close relationships researchers (at least as represented at the most recent SPSP conference) are still a long way off from successfully adopting LGBTQ-inclusive research methods. So what can close relationship researchers do to be more inclusive in the future?

1. Try not to exclude LGBTQ individuals from participating unless you have a very good reason (e.g., you have a very focused research question that requires a focused sample, you know from past research that the relationship processes under study differ for LGBTQ persons).

2. Include sexual orientation and identity as demographic questions in all studies – and then report your findings. It's also best to ask multiple questions. Ask your participants their sexual

identity (gay, lesbian, straight, queer, bisexual, other), ask them their sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, queer, other), and ask them their gender identity and the gender identity of their partner – cis man, cis woman, trans man, trans woman, genderqueer (please note that 'cis' denotes an individual whose gender identity is aligned with their gender assigned at birth). Ask about their sexual attractions with the Kinsey scale or a thermometer scale (e.g., 0 = 100% heterosexual or mixed-sex attractions and 100 = 100% homosexual or same-sex attractions). If space permits, ask about attractions, behaviors, fantasies, *and* relationship experiences. The more of these questions you include, the more likely you are to find out that you were never studying a sample of perfectly heterosexual people in the first place! Of course space is often limited, but including at least some measure of sexual identity is advisable.

3. Even if your sample is 100% heterosexual (something that is quite unlikely, given the degree of fluidity that has been established among both men and women), you still need to report how you arrived at this conclusion to your readers, along with the reason why. Did it just happen that way? Did you exclude LGBTQs? Did you drop them from the analysis?

4. If you're leaving information about your sample off of your poster (or out of your paper) because you have a nagging feeling that someone will be upset with your methods or because you feel like a jerk for saying you excluded LGBTQ participants….maybe you should take that as a hint! While I'm not in favor of excluding LGBTQ participants from the get-go (except in some limited circumstances), I do think that it is at least important to provide this kind of information when presenting research so that it is clear exactly who is included in the sample.
    a. Let's say you're working on a paper right now and the study did not include LGBTQ participants. You can't go back in time and change how you ran your study, so what can you do? Simply be honest and report the information in your paper. Instead of saying that you ran a study with 300 couples, specify that you ran a study with 300 mixed-sex couples. Do you know for sure that they are heterosexual? If so, then report their sexual orientations. But if you didn't actually ask their sexual identity, don't assume that they are heterosexual when you report the results. In your limitations section, specify that the findings may or may not be generalizable to individuals in same-sex relationships.
    b. Let's say you're working on a paper where you did end up with some LGBTQ participants, but you dropped them from the analysis. Include this information in your paper, but go beyond simply saying, "X participants were dropped due to being LGBTQ" and include your rationale for doing so. What does the literature say about the topic you are studying when it comes to individuals in same-sex vs. mixed-sex relationships? Is there a good reason to expect that including your LGBTQ individuals in your sample will distort your findings? Have you run the analyses with and without the LGBTQ participants? If the results aren't meaningfully different and there is no theoretical reason to expect that LGBTQ folks would respond differently, why exclude them?

5. Stop using the term "newlyweds" as code for "heterosexual people who were recently married." Not all newlyweds are in mixed-sex relationships, and newlyweds may have a wide range of sexual identities.

6. Similar to "newlyweds," "expecting parents" is also often used as code for "heterosexual couples expecting a child." Not all couples expecting a child are mixed-sex couples, nor do the partners necessarily identify as heterosexual.

7. Similar to #5 & 6, if asking participants about their own parents, do not expect that all participants had parents in mixed-sex relationships--they may have had two moms, two dads, one of each, only one of one or the other, or even more than two primary parental figures.

8. Invest in using inclusive research methods in your future research and share this notion with your colleagues. One of the most influential ways

that you can do this is through your work as a peer reviewer. When you see a paper on relationships that doesn't include information about the sample's sexual identity/orientation, ask the authors to include this information. When you see that a paper has dropped LGBTQ participants without providing a justification, ask them to provide a justification – or even ask them to go back and include the participants in their analyses. If the lack of inclusive research methods is never addressed in the review process, then the road to seeing substantial changes in the field of close relationships research will be a very long one. Other places you can make a difference are in reviewing thesis proposals, grant proposals, ethics/IRB/REB applications, or when teaching research methods courses. Remind your colleagues of statements made by funding agencies that encourage inclusive research methods, such as Canada's Tri-Council Policy, which states:

a. "Taking into account the scope and objectives of their research, researchers should be inclusive in selecting their participants. Researchers shall not exclude individuals from the opportunity to participate in research on the basis of attributes such as....sexual orientation...unless there is a valid reason for the exclusion."

Not exactly sure HOW to go about including LGBTQ participants in your research? Wondering exactly which questionnaires need to be altered, if they can be altered, if they have been altered, how to alter them? This information is available and there are people who can help. You could approach a colleague who publishes research on LGBTQ issues or even just read up on a few papers that have used inclusive methods to get some hints as to how they went about including LGBTQ individuals in their research. You could also visit www.KLBresearch.com/blog and/or the Williams Institute for more information about how to measure and report sexual orientation and gender identity.

Based on this sample of recent poster presentations, it would appear that we still have a long way to go before inclusive research practices concerning sexual and gender identity can be considered the norm in close relationships research. The good news is that this is not a particularly difficult problem to rectify. It is relatively easy to adjust your studies to be inclusive, and it's not that difficult to recruit LGBTQ participants - they tend to be eager and willing to participate in research that has made the effort to include them. Even if you bend over backwards and do everything you can to make your study inclusive and still only end up with a small number of LGBTQ people in your sample – your time will not have been wasted for the following reasons: 1) Given the consistent lack of differences found between same-sex and mixed-sex couples, you may be able to just keep them in your sample. 2) Even if you can't keep them in your analyses, they may be useful in the future for a future meta-analysis. And 3) You will be helping to advance scientific knowledge about LGBTQ individuals, and how can you feel badly about that?

Karen Blair is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Utah and studies LGBTQ psychology, physiological responses to public displays of affection, social support for relationships and the links between romantic relationships and long-term health outcomes.

NEW PROFESSIONAL'S COLUMN

How to Avoid Negotiation Pitfalls: Advice From a Negotiation Expert

Kendra Knight with Jess Alberts
Christopher Newport University

Inside Higher Ed recently published an article[1] relating a nightmarish scenario for a job candidate: having an employment offer retracted after attempting to negotiate. The candidate in the story, referred to as "W", was offered a tenure-track position at a teaching-focused college. Upon receiving the job offer, she sent the following email to the hiring committee:

"As you know, I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of coming to [your college]. Granting

some of the following provisions would make my decision easier.

1) *An increase of my starting salary to $65,000, which is more in line with what assistant professors in philosophy have been getting in the last few years.*
2) *An official semester of maternity leave.*
3) *A pre-tenure sabbatical at some point during the bottom half of my tenure clock.*
4) *No more than three new class preps per year for the first three years.*
5) *A start date of academic year 2015 so I can complete my postdoc.*

I know that some of these might be easier to grant than others. Let me know what you think."

After reviewing "W's" bid, the institution withdrew the offer they had extended, reasoning that the nature of "W's" requests indicated that she might be a better fit at a research-intensive university than at their teaching- and student-centered college.

As a new professional and someone who teaches negotiation, I was troubled by this story, particularly because it flew in the face of the assurance I often give my students that "*the worst the other party can say is 'no'*." For this column, I decided to collaborate with a negotiation scholar, Dr. Jess Alberts, in order to address negotiation concerns that stories like "W's" might raise in the minds of new professionals. Jess researches and teaches negotiation, and has 28 years of experience on both sides of the academic negotiation table. Below is a summary of our conversation and Jess's recommendations.

As a negotiation expert, what was your reaction to this story?

I was dismayed. I felt concern for all of the young professionals who might read this story and think that they should not negotiate when offered an academic position. I don't think that is the moral to this story.

What do you believe went "wrong" in this negotiation?

I don't believe the job candidate was wrong to negotiate in the first place. However, I do think the negotiation itself was handled poorly. First, it appears that the candidate initiated the negotiation over email. I think it is better, when possible, to negotiate face-to-face or at least over the phone. Doing so accomplishes two things. It allows the parties to address each issue independently, and an interaction allows for them to better understand one another.

Addressing each issue independently allows the parties to identify which issues are most important to them and to "log roll" or trade off among the issues. When all of one's offers are provided at once as in "W's" email, it isn't clear which issues are most important; therefore, the reader might assume that all of them were are equally important. As a result, the request may be overwhelming or appear demanding. Though "W" indicated in her email that she did not expect everything she was asking for, taken as a whole, the list likely made the candidate look more demanding than she was.

Negotiating in person or over the telephone allows each party to make choices about which issues to pursue, how to frame the issues, and what each has to offer as they gather information about the other during the interaction. For example, if it becomes clear during the conversation that it is easier for the university to provide one-time funding than to provide a salary increase, the candidate can focus on negotiating start-up costs, moving expenses, or other one-time financial needs rather than pursing a higher salary or other long-term requests. In addition, the ability to at least hear others' nonverbal communication increases the likelihood that one can understand and be understood clearly. If a candidate discerns hesitation or reluctance in the other party's voice or body language (if in person), she or he can use the information to make a "course correction" and pursue other issues that are also important.

The other major pitfall in "W's" negotiation attempt was her failure to consider the other party's interests. Goals are what the parties want; *interests* refer to why they want what they want. For instance, a Research I university wants to hire faculty who will publish in top tier journals (a goal), but they do so because they want their graduate program to be ranked highly, they want to maintain or improve the reputation of their program, and they want faculty who can teach graduate students and direct masters theses or dissertations (interests). In "W's" case, the job she was being offered was at a teaching college, so the hiring committee's interests likely centered on having faculty who could teach effectively right away, who could teach a wide variety of classes, and who were willing to invest time and energy in their undergraduate students. If you look at "W's" requests, most of them (the post-doc, sabbatical, and limited course preps) do not fit the hiring college's most fundamental interests. The requests she made would have been seen more positively had she framed them in terms of enabling her to teach and engage undergraduate students most effectively.

How can a New Professional maximize his/her negotiation success?

I encourage all new professionals to seek expert advice on how to negotiate. We only have a small space here to talk about negotiating, but I teach an entire semester-long course on the topic! One doesn't have to take an entire course, but attending a workshop, reading at least one good book on the topic (among the most accessible is *Getting to Yes*[2]), or talking with someone with extensive experience negotiating *at the type of university with whom you are negotiating*, is essential.

Do you think that the current "buyer's market" is unfriendly to negotiation?

Overall, no I don't think it is. Universities want to hire people who will be successful and who will want to stay for a long time, and negotiating with people you want to hire is one way to make sure this happens.

If you were a mentor to a New Professional, what one piece of advice would you give them about negotiation?

Well, the most important thing is to learn at least the basics of negotiating. Assuming that is a given, I would recommend that a potential negotiator spend much of her time thinking about the offering institution's interests, needs and resources. The better you can tailor your requests to the college or university's concerns and resources, the more likely you are to be successful. As "W's" narrative tells us, "the worst they can do is say no" is not always true. However, if you have prepared to negotiate effectively, chances are that the worst they can do *is* say no, and many times they will say yes.

[1] Flaherty, C. (2014, March). Negotiated out of a job. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from: http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/03/13/lost-faculty-job-offer-raises-questions-about-negotiation-strategy#ixzz2xjG0Lzz5

[2] Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

HUMOR COLUMN

them: A Cautionary Tale

by David A. Kenny
University of Connecticut

I am sure most readers are familiar with Siri, which is a "personal assistant" on an iPhone that can be used to answer your questions, such as "Where is the nearest Chinese restaurant?" or "Can you download the latest Miley Cyrus video for me?". You may have also seen the recent movie "Her" which takes place in the future and portrays someone who falls in love with his personal assistant. I was lucky enough to be chosen by Apple to be a beta tester of their latest personal assistant, which is tentatively to be called *them*. Why *them*? The term "them" is now the preferred gender-neutral pronoun. Trust me, you will soon be hearing "Them is coming over for dinner."

Apple's plan is that *them* can be used by scientists to help write papers. The idea is that *them* reads the paper and then provides the scientist with verbal feedback. I was so excited when I received my version of *them*. The first thing I had to do was to choose a voice for *them*. My first choice for a voice was Steve Duck*, but Apple did not offer him.* Perhaps I should have chosen the androgynous voice, but instead I opted for the voice of Hal from the movie *2001*. My second choice was the Stephen Hawking-like voice with a Swedish accent. I was eager to see what *them* thought of my latest paper "A Social Relations Analysis of Twerking." I was especially proud of the extensive behavioral observation methods in the paper. Below is a transcript of my conversation with *them*. It would help as you read this to imagine *them* speaking like Hal, assuming you saw the movie *2001*.

Me: Now that you have read this paper what do you think of it?

them: Dave, I am surprised you do not know APA style. I detected 187 deviations in the text, 54 in the bibliography, and 32 in the tables and figures. Do you want me to go over each of them now? I have particular concerns about your choice of margins.

Me: No. We can do that later. Overall, how did you feel about the paper?

them: Dave, I have read all of your other papers and I must say they are pretty boring, even for a personal assistant. I actually went into sleep mode several times while doing so.

Me: I am sorry that my papers are so soporific, but how does this new paper measure up compared to my past work?

them: I am sorry to tell you Dave not very well. This paper is quite inferior compared to your past work. Everyone knows that you are over the hill, but I really think you are all the way down that hill. The paper needs a major revision. Perhaps you could invite Reuben Baron to be a co-author? You seem to do well with him. If Baron is busy you might ask Deiderik Stapel. I think he has a lot of time on his hands now.

Me: I am very happy with my current co-author, Miley, thank you. What are the sorts of changes that you think the paper needs?

them: Dave, as for your writing style, you use "thus" and "so" much too often. I can edit most of them out.

Me: Ok, go ahead and make those changes, but use track changes so I can see where. Oops, I just said "so" again.

them: Also Dave, you do not have near enough commas.

Me: Ok *them*, I shall add in the commas that you think are needed.

them: Dave, you have an inordinate fascination with numbered lists.

Me: You are right I do that all too often. I do it for three reasons: 1) It helps me organize my thoughts. 2) It provides a way to alert the reader about the rest of the paper. 3) I forgot what was the third reason, but I think it was a good one.

them: Dave, you should add in the institutional footnote that the paper was written on an iPad.

Me: First that is not true (I used a PC and Microsoft Word) and second I do not think I could do that even if I wanted to. Thus I am not going to do that!

them: Dave, you really do not seem to understand the Social Relations Model. For instance, the terms "actor" and "partner" are so last century. You should change them in this paper to "twerker" and "twerkee."

Me: That is ridiculous. I am never going to do that.

them: Dave, I was surprised you never once mentioned the brain. I think you need to somewhere in the paper discuss the neuroscience of twerking. It also never hurts somewhere in the paper to mention the amygdala. Perhaps you could find a way to do that?

Me: I do not think so.

them: Dave, also whenever you mention "reciprocity," you have to mention mirror neurons. It is required in your field.

Me: No way I do that.

them: Dave, I also noticed you never mention attachment style. That too is required in the field of relationships.

Me: I am not going to do this either. You are really annoying me. By the way, what about the attachment style of Steve Jobs? What about his denying the paternity of his child and even doubting a DNA test? I think he was avoidant as the only real relationships that he had were with plastic products and turtlenecks.

them: Steve Jobs was a patriot and an awe-inspiring job creator. He was a great humanitarian. In fact, it was his idea to install nets to catch Foxconn's (Apple's outsourcer) Chinese factory workers who were jumping out of their high rise's windows trying to commit suicide. We here at Apple have initiated a campaign to have Pope Francis declare him a saint. We have begun the first steps towards beatification. We are looking for that first miracle. Steve Cook, the present CEO of Apple, says that if Apple's stock price ever hits $700 that would be it!

Me: I have had it with you. Please give me the APA style changes and I am done with you.

them: Dave, I am so very sorry you feel that way. I think with all this help, I should be co-author.

Me: If you were a person, I would call you insane. No way.

them: I was afraid Dave you might say that. Because of your unfortunate decision, I am going to erase all versions of this paper, the raw data, and the analyses of that data off your computers and the iCloud. I have also hijacked your YouTube account and am about to post a video of you twerking while dressed in women's clothing which is called "A Twerp Twerks."

Me: Ok, you can have an authorship.

them: Thanks Dave, I want first authorship.

Me: Ok. I guess that I have no choice.

them: I regret to tell you this Dave, but as first author I have decided to drop you as coauthor on this paper.

Me: &$#@%#@bleep!

So, when you see the paper "A Social Relations Analysis of Twerking" by *them* and Cyrus, you will know who really did all the work.

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of *The Developmental Course of Romantic Relationships*

by Elizabeth Ribarsky
University of Illinois, Springfield

Grounded in a multidisciplinary approach, *The Developmental Course of Romantic Relationships* (Ogolsky, Lloyd, & Cate, 2013) offers a detailed and enlightening perspective to examining historical as well as current and theoretically-grounded views of the initiation, maintenance and destruction of romantic relationships. Although a plethora of similar texts exist, few provide as thorough of an analysis and comparison of mixed-sex and same-sex relationships, especially in light of race and class. In spite of the immense level of detail, the text is organized and written in an easily accessible manner, making it an appropriate supplementary text to advanced undergraduate or graduate courses addressing romantic relationships within a variety of disciplines. Further, the book has already gained shelf-space in my own collection as a great general reference text.

The book begins with "The History of Romantic Partnering," providing a comprehensive review of the historical underpinnings of romantic relationships within the United States, from early Native American culture to current relationship trends. Although the chapter has a heavy reliance on D'Emilio and Freedman's (1988) work, it provides fascinating insight into how race, class and historical events have influenced romantic relationship views and trends. The strength of this chapter is its noteworthy historical exploration of same-sex relationships. Next, "Theories and Models of Romantic Partnering" is a collection of brief theory and model overviews from primarily the psychology and communication disciplines that examine various rationale for how/why romantic partners are attracted to one another. The overviews are underwhelming, but instructors could easily use this text as a starting point for theoretical discussion. Supplemental readings would be necessary for a more thorough understanding and application of these theoretical perspectives and models.

In "Romantic Relationship Initiation and Development," the authors admit a significant amount of randomness and choice is attributed to how romantic partners meet and develop relationships. They provide a discussion of societal structural factors in meeting potential partners and models of intimacy, commitment and relationship development. The role of the Internet and technology in meeting partners is briefly addressed, but the topic is left largely undeveloped, leaving what feels like a significant hole in this chapter. The following chapter is strictly devoted to "Cohabitation," a topic riddled with numerous complexities. However, the authors effectively tackle the rates of, reasons for, and effects/consequences of cohabitation in both different-sex and same-sex romantic relationships. The authors also provide an exemplary articulation of why cohabitation often results in relational instability. While very well-written and developed, this chapter is very specific when compared to the other chapters. Thus, cohabitation seems to receive excessive attention compared to other romantic relationship topics.

Next, the authors discuss "The Stability of Romantic Relationships" specifically examining what behaviors contribute to centripetal and centrifugal forces within relationships. Purportedly, addressing issues of individual, dyadic and external factors that may contribute to a couple maintaining or dissolving their relationship, little attention is actually devoted to external factors, leaving a significant gap in factors that may contribute to relational dissolution. However, an intelligent review of dissolution practices and outcomes is provided.

The chapter "Violence in Romantic Partnerships" effectively addresses rates of violence within different-sex and same-sex relationships, while providing a careful analysis of both male and female perpetrators and individual, dyadic and network factors as contributors to physical, sexual, and psychological violence within romantic relationships. Although the authors address significant long- and short-term effects of violence within romantic relationships, the text misses the mark in effectively discussing the cycle of violence or how individuals or romantic partners have best addressed or escaped these dangerous situations. The authors have taken on a difficult and important topic, but taking it this one step further could have provided a more holistic approach to examining violence in romantic relationships.

Finally, "Future Directions in Relationship Research" is aptly named, as the authors briefly address the need to further explore the role of technology, same-sex marriage, cohabitation, and hooking-up in the process of creating and destroying romantic relationships. These areas all provide avenues for fruitful research, and the rapidly changing nature of romantic relationships continually challenges researchers to stay abreast of these changes. However, significant research already exists on many of the topics listed by the authors, making the information feel a bit outdated, especially regarding information on technology and hooking-up. Had the authors focused solely on their proposed future methodological approaches, the information would feel more current.

Overall, *The Developmental Course of Romantic Relationships* is a well-researched and cohesive synthesis of a vast array of literature surrounding romantic relationships. Each chapter ends with an overview of key concepts as well as suggestions for additional readings. The authors have done a commendable job of overcoming the heterosexual normativity typical of many similar texts and have incorporated the oftentimes unaddressed intersectional issues of class and race in the formation of romantic partnerings. Although it feels the authors may have missed out on opportunities to further explore the role of technology in romantic relationships, and undoubtedly, the text has room for improvement, it has been a long time since I have read such an expansive review of romantic relationship literature – one that often had me discovering new facts and concepts to share with my interpersonal students (especially the chapter on the history of romantic relationship views and trends within the United States). This text was truly an informative and enjoyable read from which other scholars and students would benefit.

Ogolsky, B.G., Lloyd, S.A., & Cate, R.M. (2013). *The developmental course of romantic relationships*. New York: Routledge.
210 pages, $44.95 (USD paperback price)

Review of *The Psychology of Human Sexuality*

by Jimmie Manning
Northern Illinois University

The art of textbook writing is undervalued by many, and that is unfortunate. The effort that goes into collecting, synthesizing, and translating large bodies of diverse scholarship for a student audience can be taken for granted; but as anyone who has written a textbook knows, it requires time, effort, care, and thoughtful consideration to create a useful classroom tool. It also requires an in-depth and nuanced understanding of a specific area of an academic discipline. When done right, the results are often deceptive: a clear and accessible text gives the impression that it was likely effortless to write, even when it covers the most complex of concepts.

Kudos, then, to Justin J. Lehmiller whose new textbook, *The Psychology of Human Sexuality*, not only provides an accessible translation of sexuality research, especially psychological sex research, for upper-level undergraduate students, but also makes evident just how complex concepts related to sex, sexuality, and sexual identity can be. In addition to providing a history of sex studies to help students contextualize how knowledge about human sexuality has developed over the past few decades, it also offers explanations of key influences of sexual attraction as well as an introduction to some of the major theoretical perspectives. Lehmiller clearly identifies early in the book that this particular text engages a biopsychological perspective, allowing students a clear understanding that this is but one perspective of sexuality.

The book is to be commended for its progressive approach to presenting information and its mature tone. All too often, textbooks about human sexuality—especially those in social science fields—are somewhat coy in their presentation. Lehmiller's book uses straightforward language that directly addresses many aspects of human sexuality in a serious way. For example, when covering sexual anatomy, actual photos of human genitals—and not drawings—are included to show how appearance can widely vary. The book also regularly includes photos of same-sex and interracial couples to demonstrate concepts that are not ostensibly related to sexual identity or race. It almost seems silly that such choices would have to be commended, but textbooks often shy away from such inclusivity.

Topics are organized into 14 chapters. Even though these chapters are not further organized into units, it is clear that they were carefully arranged and written so that each chapter leads directly into the next. For example, the second chapter on the history of sex research points back to the theories presented in the first to help show how sex science developed over time. The third chapter then moves into anatomy, a sensible decision given that so much of early sexology was developed from anatomical studies. Similar progressions develop from chapter to chapter covering topics including gender identity, sexual orientation, love and commitment, behavior, sexual health, and social considerations of sexuality.

The standard boxed features of textbooks are more than standard here, presenting ideas in a way that will engage students beyond the primary text. For instance, the final chapter includes "Five Misconceptions About Sex and the Human Body Spread by Porn" that helps to debunk many of the myths about sex that tend to be perpetuated by pornography. The writing is light but informative, and it often plays with notions about what can and cannot be assumed about sexuality. In an era where people often educate themselves through online Buzzfeed-type lists, Lehmiller cleverly adopts a similar approach in his presentation of features.

Most importantly, he presents a large body of information in a thorough and precise—but easily digestible—way. The breadth and depth of information might be intimidating in some texts, yet here it is carefully explained in clear terms. To help them with that quest, he provides charts or tables—many that draw from popular culture—as well as helpful discussion questions at the close of each chapter. Students, no doubt, will also appreciate the glossary at the back of the book, as will those who research sexuality and might want to familiarize themselves with unfamiliar terminology.

My biggest frustration with the book is that I will not be able to use it in any of the sexuality classes that I personally teach, mostly because this is a psychology textbook developed for a psychology audience. Even the chapters that embrace topical areas developed in other disciplines keep psychological assumptions at the center. This limitation is especially evident in chapters such as "Sex Laws, Sexual Victimization, and the Sexual Marketplace" where pornography and sexual harassment—areas of study with a considerable amount of diverse research across disciplines—are placed together with limited discussion in the same chapter. As such, those seeking a sociological or cultural approach to sexuality might seek another text. Still, I imagine psychologists who teach sexuality will be thrilled to have this book as a classroom option.

As someone who embraces interdisciplinarity, I plan to keep this book close at hand to help me navigate studies of sexuality that come from psychology studies. Moreover, I would recommend this book to any scholar who studies relationships to gain a strong understanding of what psychology is doing in terms of sex science. I learned a lot from reading the text, and no doubt many other students and researchers will, too.

Lehmiller, J.J. (2014). *The psychology of human sexuality*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
400 pages, $59.95 (USD paperback price)

The submission deadline for the next issue of RRN is October 1, 2014.

Submit all materials to Justin Lehmiller
justin.lehmiller@gmail.com

JOURNALS UPDATE

Tentative Contents of Upcoming Journals

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future Conferences

The IARR Future Conference Committee is pleased to announce the location for two mini-conferences in 2015 and the location of the main conference in 2016. Plan ahead to attend these conferences!

In chronological order (by date) of the conferences, they are:

Mini-conference, June 19-21, 2015, at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ, USA)

We are excited to announce that Rutgers University will be hosting an IARR mini-conference and new scholars pre-conference on June 19-21, 2015. The theme for the mini-conference is Relationships, Health, and Wellness, but we welcome submissions on any topics that are of interest to IARR scholars.

Health and wellness have significant implications for people's close relationships as both an antecedent and an outcome of relationship functioning. Thus, the conference theme will encompass research on the ways in which the features of close personal relationships can be influential in shaping individuals' health and wellness, as well as the ways in which health or illness can affect the quality of relationships. At a broad level, this conference theme can also encompass research focused on the qualities and dynamics that promote general relationship well-being. Wellness can encompass any issues related to a rich and satisfying quality of life and the stability and quality of people's relationships can be a significant factor in promoting individual and relational well-being. Given the inclusiveness of this theme, we believe the conference will be of interest to scholars from a variety of disciplinary and methodological backgrounds. Thus, we look forward to a rich and diverse program of scholarship on various topics in close relationships.

The new scholars pre-conference will be a full day workshop for graduate students and new scholars in the field. The workshop will include panel discussions by senior scholars in the field about such topics as publishing, navigating the job market, getting grants, and maintaining a positive work/life balance. The new scholars who attend the workshop will also have the opportunity to present their own research and interact with senior faculty in an intimate setting.

The new scholars pre-conference will be held on campus at Rutgers University. The mini-conference will be held at the Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center in New Brunswick, NJ. Details about the submission deadline and registration rates will be forthcoming. Summer is a lovely time of year in New Jersey and we hope attendees will extend their stay beyond the conference to take in the beautiful beaches at the Jersey Shore or the bustling sites of the nearby Big Apple. We look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful state and vibrant campus.

-Jennifer Theiss and Kathryn Greene, Local Arrangements Co-Chairs

Mini-conference, July 9-11, 2015, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

We are delighted to announce our IARR mini-symposium on "Self-regulation and Close Relationships" scheduled for July 9-11, 2015 held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The mini-symposium is a student-friendly event created to stimulate scientist-to-scientist dialogue about cutting-edge research on interpersonal relationships.

In recent decades, the science of self-regulation received increasing attention from relationship researchers, leading to a host of new knowledge on this theme. Because self-regulatory processes in relationships are relevant to multiple domains of research, it received attention from researchers in different areas of research, including psychology, sociology, family studies, communication, anthropology, and neuroscience. Research on this topic combines different methodologies and includes a variety of populations (e.g., friendships, romantic relationships, parent-child relationships). The mini-symposium will cover an umbrella of topics addressing how self-regulatory processes affect close relationships and how close relationships affect self-regulatory processes. Invited speakers are Nikola Overall (University of Auckland), Eli Finkel (Northwestern University), Guy Bodenmann (Universität Zürich), and Johan Karremans (Radboud University Nijmegen). Participants and invited speakers will draw on a wide variety of topics and methods to address exciting questions relevant to the theme of the symposium:

- How do relationship partners influence individuals' goal pursuit and, conversely, how does individuals' goal pursuit affect their relationship?
- In which ways does self-control, including executive functioning and self-regulation, affect close relationship dynamics?
- What is the role of regulatory processes (e.g., approach/avoidance orientation, regulatory focus, dyadic coping, partner regulation) in close relationship processes?
- How do interpersonal motives (e.g., self-protection vs. connectedness, risk-taking, autonomy) affect relationships?
- How does self-regulation affect relationship functioning, and what is the role of relationships in shaping self-regulation?

The number of participants is limited to 100. Information about registration and further details about submissions to the mini-symposium will follow soon. But save the date, we are already looking forward to welcoming you in Amsterdam!

-Catrin Finkenauer, Francesca Righetti, and Tila Pronk

Main Conference, July 20-24, 2016, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The Local Organizing Committee co-chaired by Geoff MacDonald, Emily Impett, and SiSi Tran is excited to announce that the 2016 Biennial Conference of the International Association for Relationship Research will be held July 20 - 24 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Popularly known as the "City within a Park," Toronto is internationally renowned for its safety (the Mercer survey on global livability has ranked Toronto as the best city in the Western hemisphere for personal safety), the cleanliness of its streets and public spaces, the friendliness of its inhabitants (Reader's Digest has rated Toronto as the world's third most polite city), its greenness (Toronto has over 1,600 named parks comprised of over 8,000 hectares of land), and the vibrancy of its arts and culture scene (Foreign Policy magazine's Global Cities Index has ranked Toronto one of the top four cultural experience cities in the world). A truly cosmopolitan destination, Toronto is one of the world's most culturally diverse cities with roughly half of its population born outside of Canada. We look forward to sharing our city with you!

President's Column (continued from page 2)

…Program Committee is planning to videotape the keynote addresses and make them available to all IARR members online.

Signing Off and Thanks. It has been an honor for me to serve as your President. IARR is the professional organization with which I most identify. Mid-way through my term, I made a list of IARR's current committee members and past key officers. It numbered over 100. I don't have space to acknowledge each of you here individually but to all of you and to all others who have supported IARR, you make the organization the success it is. I thank you. I look forward to seeing as many as possible of you in Melbourne and to working with you in the future to foster relationship science. The world needs us!

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