

# RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### 2015 Spring Report

by Jeff Simpson  
University of Minnesota

Greetings to everyone!

During the past few months, the IARR Board has started working with Geoff MacDonald and his group in anticipation of our next major conference, which will be in the beautiful city of Toronto. The event will take place July 20-24, 2016. Planning is well underway and more information about the conference will be disseminated via email announcements and the IARR website toward the end of this year. Here is some current information from the Toronto group:

“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!”

IARR is excited to have an opportunity to spend time in one of the finest and most vibrant cities in North America, so please mark the dates on your calendars!

Prior to Toronto, however, we have two excellent mini-conferences in 2015, each of which is focusing on important and timely themes in relationship science. The first mini-conference, which is being organized by Jen Theiss on the topic of Relationship Health and Wellness, will take place June 19-21 near the campus of Rutgers University in New Jersey. The second mini-conference, which is being arranged by Catrin Finkenauer on the topic of Self-Regulation and Relationships, will be held July 9-11 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Further information about each mini-conference can be found on the IARR website. We are delighted to report that both mini-conferences have full registrations! If you have any questions about either mini-conference, please contact Jen or Catrin directly. As we had hoped, both events have drawn a lot of interest, and both programs look excellent.

Several other important things have happened in the past few months. Here are some highlights:

- Former President Dan Perlman spearheaded a review of IARR’s finances with the Finance Committee, and they sent a formal report to the IARR Board in March. We are pleased to report that the financial review went very well! It was summarized by the Committee as follows: “Based on this inspection, the Finance Committee finds that the records of financial transactions have been adequately kept and that those kept by the Secretary-Treasurer are congruent with statements provided by IARR’s financial institutions....the Committee expresses

its deep thanks to Leah Bryant for her hard work and for her very prudent approach to the use of IARR's resources."

- On other fronts, a search has started for the next editor of *Relationship Research News*, which is being sent out electronically and can also be found on the IARR website. The next *RRN* editor will start in October 2015. Many thanks to Justin Lehmler for his fine and dedicated years of service running *RRN* very well!
- Led by Sean Horan, the Future Conferences Committee is soliciting nominations (including self-nominations) to host mini-conferences in 2017 as well as the main conference in 2018. Letters of intent to host a mini-conference are due May 1 (tentatively), and letters of intent to host the 2018 conference are due May 15 (tentatively). If you have any interest in hosting a conference and submitting a formal application in July or August, please contact Sean ([seanmhoran@gmail.com](mailto:seanmhoran@gmail.com)).
- Nickola Overall (chair of the Mentoring Committee), in close collaboration with Ashley Randall, has developed a new mentoring program designed to facilitate connections between established IARR mentors and younger IARR mentees. Details about this exciting new program will be announced in June.
- Silvia Donato and the Membership Committee are trying to increase our membership. One of their initiatives is to reach out to prospective members (especially younger people and those in countries outside North America). If you know of people who might be interested in joining IARR, please contact Silvia ([silvia.donato@unicatt.it](mailto:silvia.donato@unicatt.it)).
- The Publications Committee (chaired by Denise Solomon) is talking with SAGE about a new video series. SAGE is launching discipline-focused, pedagogically-informed, and also research-focused video products for the worldwide library market. These video products will be made available through SAGE's Knowledge product. One major goal is the inclusion of cutting-edge research from the perspectives and voices of leading academics, including IARR members. Denise and her committee are currently having discussions with SAGE to determine whether and how IARR could be involved.
- For some time, there has been talk of establishing Fellows recognition for esteemed members of IARR. Garth Fletcher, chair of the Awards Committee, is currently developing a set of rules and procedures to identify, nominate, and evaluate potential Fellows candidates. More information will be forthcoming in the next few months.
- Videos of the keynotes at the Melbourne conference are now posted on the IARR website, thanks to the Melbourne Conference Program Committee and our Webmaster, Dylan Selterman.
- After considerable discussion, the IARR Board recently voted to divide the role of treasurer/secretary into two separate positions (treasurer and secretary) due to the heavy workload required of one person performing both duties. Each position will be an elected one starting with the next round of elections, and the next treasurer and next secretary will both hold voting positions on the Board.
- After further discussion, the Board also voted to make the Conference Program Chair an appointed (rather than an elected) non-voting member of the Board. Beginning with the next Program Chair, the person who holds this position will be selected by the Board in close consultation with the next (2018) Conference Planning Committee. The current Program Chair (Lorne Campbell) will remain a voting member of the Board until his term ends following the 2016 conference.
- Various other IARR committees are currently implementing several important plans/goals that each committee has developed for 2014-2016. If you would like to discuss the plans/goals that a committee has established and is implementing, please contact the appropriate committee chair (see the list on the final page of this issue for names and contact information). In addition, if you have suggestions to make, please contact the proper committee chair.

In closing, I want to thank the numerous people behind the scenes who make IARR run so well and so efficiently on a daily basis. Speaking for the Board, we hope to see many of you at one or both of our mini-conferences in June and July!

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**RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS**

**Editor**

Justin J. Lehmiller  
Ball State University

**Associate Editors**

Amy Muise  
University of Toronto Mississauga

Debra Mashek  
Harvey Mudd College

Jessica Eckstein  
Western Connecticut State University

*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 via [justin.lehmiller@gmail.com](mailto: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 Lehmillier  
Ball State University**

On behalf of the entire editorial team at *Relationship Research News*, I am pleased to present our first issue of 2015. Many thanks to my fantastic team of Associate Editors, Jessica Eckstein, Deb Mashek, and Amy Muise (on a side note, congratulations to Amy on becoming a new mother this year!). My thanks go out to everyone else who contributed to this issue of RRN as well.

As Jeff mentioned in the President's column, this is the third and final year of my editorial term at RRN. Nominations are currently being solicited for the incoming editor, who will shadow production of the November issue before taking the helm. My team will do everything possible to ensure a seamless transition.

With that said, please be sure to check out the contents of this issue. Associate Editor Deb Mashek collaborated with Jessica Borelli to put together an article on relationship "lifehacks" worth sharing with students who are taking college-level courses on close relationships. This article is a must-read for anyone who teaches such courses because it is bursting with practical information that will undoubtedly enhance students' appreciation of your class and enhance their ability to apply course material to their everyday lives

Sticking with this theme of practicality, Associate Editor Jessica Eckstein collaborated with Nancy Brule, Katy Wiss, William Petkanas, and Leah Bryant to produce a worthwhile read on how to address conflict in professional academic relationships (an issue I would venture to guess that all of us have dealt with at one time or another).

Jessica Eckstein also coordinated a review of a new book authored by Chris Agnew and Susan South: *Interpersonal Relationships and Health: Social and Clinical Psychological Mechanisms*. Thank you to

Lindsey Rodriguez for graciously agreeing to provide a review of this timely textbook.

Also in this issue is Dave Kenny's humor column, in which he answers the question of what relationship is the most important of them all (hint: his answer may surprise you!). In the New Professional Representative's column, Ashley Randall introduces a practical resource for women navigating personal and interpersonal challenges in graduate school. Last but not least are several important announcements, including calls from the Media Relations and Future Conferences Committees.

On a side note, as a member of the Media Relations Committee, I ask that you please pay special attention to our announcement on page 18. One of our committee's goals is to compile a set of useful resources to assist IARR members in their interactions with the media. Many of us are called upon to speak to the media about our own research, or to comment on the science of relationships more generally; however, few of us have received any formal media training. As a result, it would be extremely useful to hear IARR members' questions and concerns on this topic so that we can effectively tailor the resources we develop to the needs of our organization.

Thank you again to everyone who contributed to this issue of RRN. Happy reading!

-Justin

**Submission deadline for the  
Next issue of RRN**

**October 1, 2015**

**Submit all materials  
to Justin Lehmillier**

**justin.lehmiller@gmail.com**

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### **Creating the Relationships We Want: Relationship Lifehacks to Share with Students**

**by Debra J. Mashek<sup>1</sup> and  
Jessica Borelli<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Harvey Mudd College

<sup>2</sup>Pomona College

The term “lifhack” has been popping up with increasing frequency over the past couple years. A Facebook friend posted a lifhack for perfectly soft cuticles (answer: coconut oil). A colleague claimed she found a great lifhack for frying the perfect egg (answer: coconut oil). A random stranger at the dance club claimed to have discovered a lifhack for the best masturbatory experience ever (you guessed it: coconut oil). Defined by Urban Dictionary as “a tool or technique that makes some aspect of one's life easier or more efficient,” lifhacks seek to simplify the complexities of life.

Intrigued, we found ourselves thinking about the twentysomethings in our *Psychology of Close Relationships* courses. As the Spring semester races to a close, and as many of our students prepare to transition from college into the ever-formidable real world, what aspects of the class do we want these students to carry with them? Sure, we want them to remember that the study of relationships is amenable to the scientific method. And, we want them to recall the value of theoretical frameworks for thinking about and studying the range of human relationship experiences.

But, if we're being honest with ourselves, what we really, really want these students to carry with them—what would warm our hearts if they were able to summon five, ten, even fifteen years down the line—are the tools our discipline offers for navigating with some modicum of grace and success the wilds of their social worlds. In other words, we want them to remember relationship lifhacks, the concrete tools or

techniques that will help them create and maintain satisfying, healthy relationships.

So what are these lifhacks? What concrete tips does our discipline offer for doing relationships and doing them well? There are many (our journals and leading textbooks are treasure troves of ideas in this domain); however, for our purposes, we wanted to create a short, unordered list that could serve as the foundation for an uplifting retrospective of sorts to mark the semester's end. We will share these lifhacks with students on the final day of the term as a workshop infused with reflective writing and discussion.

#### ***Relationship Lifhack #1: Savor your relationships.***

Research by Jessica Borelli and colleagues (Borelli, Rasmussen, Burkhart, & Sbarra, 2015) shows that reflecting on moments of intense positive connection in romantic relationships is associated with enhanced positive emotion, and consequently, the ability to better weather the challenges all relationships face from time to time. Be mindful of those moments in your relationships when you feel particularly cherished, protected, or accepted. Mark those moments in memory or in a journal; recognize them for what they are: moments of felt security. And regularly return to these moments in your mind. How were you feeling? What were you thinking? What does this moment tell you about your partner? Your relationship? Your future? Turn the moment around in your mind; appreciate the texture of the experience. This sort of relational savoring reinforces your emotional shock absorbers, making it easier to ride out the bumps we all experience along the relational road.

#### ***Relationship Lifhack #2: Take a third-party perspective.***

On average, relationship satisfaction declines over time. Yet, experimental longitudinal research by Eli Finkel and colleagues (2013) offers a simple tool for potentially insulating our relationships from this typical decline: take a third-party perspective when disagreements arise with your partner (check out Eli's TED Talk on this research here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8fe0IkGnUk>). Specifically, research participants in the experimental condition were told to, “Think about [the]

disagreement with your partner from the perspective of a neutral third party who wants the best for all involved; a person who sees things from a neutral point of view. How might this person think about the disagreement? How might he or she find the good that could come from it?” Participants who wrote for seven minutes in response to this question (and who then contemplated the challenges of taking a third-party perspective and brainstormed ways of overcoming these challenges in future disagreements) staved off the decline in relationship satisfaction that we typically see over time; the satisfaction of participants in the control condition declined in the expected manner.

### ***Relationship Lifhack #3: Talk about money.***

There’s no doubt money is an emotion-laden resource for many individuals and couples. According to a 2012 survey conducted by the American Institute of CPAs, 27% of couples point to financial matters as the chief stressor in their relationships (ahead of children and chores). Money matters; just as the presence of money can lend stability to a couple’s life, the absence of money can be a daunting vulnerability for couples. Our students often express surprise when they think about all the ways money—and the possibility of economic stress—functions in relationships (e.g., differential earning power, job loss, prolonged illness, secretive spending, requests from family and friends for loans). Importantly, different attitudes and practices toward debt management, spending, and saving can trigger disagreements. We thus offer the following lifhack: talk about money.

There’s a great article by Christina Cobb posted at [youngmoney.com](http://youngmoney.com) titled *Money Talk Before Marriage: Five Conversations You Should Have*; our students appreciate the clear advice about how to talk about spending and saving habits, income, debt damage, how to develop joint goals, and options for joint money management. We also recommend Stacy Rapacon’s piece at [Kiplinger.com](http://Kiplinger.com) titled *4 Critical Money Questions to Ask Before you Get Married*. The questions are: How much is there? Where does it come from? Where is it kept? Where is it going? Here again, the straightforward questions and the clear explanations of why the answers matter seem to empower our students to take the plunge and actually talk about money.

### ***Relationship Lifhack #4: Seek out novelty.***

Work by Arthur Aron and colleagues (2013) points to another simple strategy we can use to protect the health of our relationships: regular exposure to novelty. Whether couples do new things together or the individuals within a relationship pursue novelty in a solo domain, relationships benefit when we explore and expand. Novelty invites us to see the world in new ways and gives us access to resources and identities that can help us achieve our life goals. When couples engage in novel experiences together, their relationship satisfaction increases. And the experience need not be of an earth-shattering magnitude. A visit to a new restaurant or going on a hike—if those are things the couple doesn’t normally do together—are novel and can be beneficial to relationships.

### ***Relationship Lifhack #5: Be vulnerable.***

Harry Reis and Phil Shaver (1988) tell us that intimacy is the state of being cared for, validated, and understood. Those things require that our partners know us—the real us; only then can we experience the warmth and security of intimacy. But, it can be hard to entrust this authenticity to others, especially to those who hold the power to squash us if they reject or judge us for who we really are: our partners. Clinicians who work with couples know the importance of helping people be vulnerable in the context of closeness (Johnson, 1996), and vulnerability is discussed as the marker of courage and the path to authentic living (Brown, 2012).

When we can’t share our real selves with our partners, we deny them the chance to respond to us in ways that demonstrate they cherish and accept us. We thus continue in the relationship feeling uncertain of the presence, magnitude, and steadfastness of that regard. We urge our students: take the risk of showing your most vulnerable self to your partner, for only then do you open the door for authentic acceptance. This also means all topics should be fair game for discussion in a relationship; if there’s something you can’t talk about, this is a red flag that you don’t trust in your partner’s ability or willingness to accept you as you are; this, in turn, is a red flag for the relationship’s long-term viability.

***Relationship Lifhack #6: Be good, giving, and game in bed.***

Sex advice columnist Dan Savage advocates an approach to sexual relationships that he terms GGG: "Good in bed (work on those skills), giving of pleasure (without always expecting immediate reciprocation), and game for anything—*within reason*" (see his April 15, 2015 column). Amy Muise and Emily Impett (2015) explored the extent to which being motivated to meet a partner's sexual needs—or being high in *sexual communal strength*—prospectively predicts positive relationship outcomes. The data indicated that the partners of people with a strong impulse to satisfy their partner's sexual needs were more satisfied with—and more committed to—their relationships. In other words, wanting to satisfy a partner between the sheets, even when you yourself are not necessarily in the mood, bodes well for the health of the relationship (again, within reason—if you find that you are always having sex just to please your partner, that's reason for concern).

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Our list is clearly incomplete; no doubt other relationship researchers and clinicians would include different hacks on their lists. But, for now, these are the ones our students will receive in a little deck of cards, lovingly bound with twine and a message to "open when you're ready to do the hard work of maintaining a relationship."

Therein lies one of two discomforts we have about the whole idea of articulating relational lifehacks: hacks are intended to make life easier. Yet, there's nothing easy about doing relationships. They take a lot of hard work, and they (and the individuals who comprise them) are ever-changing, requiring tremendous adaptability and reassessment along the way. We suspect nearly every relationship researcher would admit, if pressed, that even those of us who study this stuff for years on end and who can quote the research findings with ease struggle to employ these lessons when they're most needed. Similarly, even the most seasoned couple therapist knows that understanding what couples need to succeed is far easier than implementing relationship-promoting behaviors. Even perfect knowledge (if there were such a thing) would unlikely translate into perfect implementation.

Our second discomfort resides amid the critical assumption made by the relational lifehacks listed above. Namely, they assume a relationship already exists. It seems a disservice to our students to not also include on the list those things we know about preparing the self for future relationships. To this end, we turn to Meg Jay's wonderful wisdom, as outlined in *The Defining Decade: Why your twenties matter—and how to make the most of them now*. Jay, a clinical psychologist, dedicates a full third of her book to talking about relationships; the key take-home point from this section is that twentysomethings don't take their close relationships as seriously as they should, mainly because of the pressure to appear uninterested in commitment. We assign this book to our students because this message is compelling, powerfully relevant, and undeniably timely. We summarize three highlights here (and will include them in our end-of-semester workshop) as pieces of advice we want our students to hold in mind as they try to make sense of their myriad experiences and feelings related to relating; or not.

***Take your relationships seriously.*** Regarding the relationships of twentysomethings, one of Jay's clients told her, "It's just practice. The twenties are a dress rehearsal." Jay countered, "And look at what you're practicing...consider what part you're rehearsing to play" (p. 101). Jay's point here is that when our twentysomething students settle for "no-criteria or low-criteria relationships" (p. 79), they are establishing habits of mind and behavior that set less than ideal trajectories for their future, long-term relationships—the ones they deem as more real, more important. We need to make clear to students that they are allowed to care about their relationships.

***Be picky.*** One of our favorite insights from Jay's book is the reminder that when we select a lifelong partner we are also selecting a co-parent for our potential future kids, a co-signer for our potential future mortgage, and a caretaker for our times of need. As Jay says to clients, "you're about to pick your family" (p. 86). We need to give our students permission to be picky, especially about those things that will matter not just next year but 30 years from now.

***It's OK to have wants and needs.*** One of the many poignant chapters in Jay's book traces a client's shift from wanting to be wanted to having wants of her

own. Given many of our students saw less than ideal models of adult relationships growing up, it may not be obvious to them what's possible in a healthy relationship or what they can reasonably expect and strive for in their own relationships. As teachers in close relationships courses, we can follow Jay's lead by encouraging students to think now about what they want and need. In addition, they need to be able to communicate these needs. We ask students to imagine themselves telling a partner about a want or need. If the thought of doing so makes them uncomfortable, we offer a reminder that there are two related processes at play – knowing what we want and articulating these wants – and that both are essential. No doubt, a good therapist can help all of us develop lifelong skills in both domains.

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Amid the chaos of semester's end we reflect on why it is we study and teach close relationships. Like so many in our field, we believe the knowledge we create in our labs—and the content that fills our journals and our textbooks—matters. It matters because relationships matter. Our students matter. Our students' relationships matter—both current and future. For these reasons, we offer them our field's lifehacks.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Judging from the opening examples, it seems we should also recommend everyone buy a jar of coconut oil; we leave it to our discerning readers to evaluate the credibility of such advice.

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## It's All Relational: Blinded or Aided by Our Own Lens?

by Jessica J. Eckstein<sup>1</sup>, Nancy J. Brule<sup>2</sup>, Katy Wiss<sup>1</sup>, William Petkanas<sup>1</sup>, & Leah E. Bryant<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Western Connecticut State University

<sup>2</sup>Bethel University

<sup>3</sup>DePaul University

Everything is a relationship, or so it may seem, to those of us who study relationships. Groups are made up of relationships. Organizations are made up of groupings of relationships. And so it goes. For better or worse, our academic institutions are comprised of relationships, with some more functional than others. Although the nature of our work is often solitary, we are not alone. Relationships abound, and as such, they must be navigated. But sometimes it can be difficult navigating the professional academic relationship waters.

As scholars of relationships, we are frequently expected to be experts at managing interpersonal issues. As relational "experts", we know all too well the reality of relational interactions: knowing is not doing and complex relational interactions involve myriad variables. And this relational nuance becomes particularly apparent when conflict is present – both at individual and organizational group levels. Put differently, how do relational scholars manage professional relationships using (or not) the "tools of

the trade”? Given the parameters of varying role expectations at different types of institutions, how are we enabled or constrained in our options for effectively dealing with both positive and negative relational issues that arise within the academy?

Our thoughts are based on discussions initiated at a recent competitive panel at the National Communication Association’s annual conference in Chicago, Illinois. In this piece, we delve even further to examine how varied organizational experiences and approaches to interpersonal relationships are served by various conflict approaches. As participants/authors, we consider a range of organizational roles within the university setting. We represent a variety of institution types, including private and public; small, mid-sized, and large; union and non-union; faith-based and secular; research- and teaching-focused; and serving diverse and homogenized groups of colleagues and students. Our approaches to professional conflict are based in our relational scholarship (which we conceptualize broadly as research, teaching, and service), which comes from the subdisciplines of organizational, interpersonal, media/ed, rhetorical, political, and spiritual theories and research foci.

### ***Setting the Scene***

Most relational scholars are familiar with established theories and research-based advice on the *appropriate* and/or *effective* (a key distinction) strategies, styles, and tactics for competently dealing with interpersonal conflict (e.g., Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995). Therefore, we will not dwell on those tools here. Instead, we focus on new ways to internally reframe our own perspectives as relational researchers, teachers, and practitioners – re-calibrating our lens, so to speak. Ultimately, our hope is that this discussion of relational perspectives and experiences will serve as both an applied thought-provoker and a challenge to “practice what we preach” in the academy. This can obviously help our institutions, departments, and students as we become better relators. But more importantly, it can refresh our own approaches and mindsets, helping us – as scholars of relationships working largely in academia – to renew (in the face of obstacles) our original passion for relational scholarship.

Anyone who teaches or studies basic conflict skills knows that a common tactic for addressing conflict is to first identify its source. However, we also recognize that the apparent *content* is rarely the true obstacle to resolution. Rather, in basic interpersonal relationships, it is typically *identity* and *relational* goals that need to be addressed. Professionally, with multiple personalities and ego-types at play, the issue becomes more complex. Further, ongoing conflict subsumes all of the episodic interactions and can create a patterned, unintentionally complex environment.

As colleagues hired for the same purpose, with presumably equivalent competencies, scholars are supposed to be working toward the goals, vision, and mission of their larger organization. But within that framework, we realistically manage others’ personality and psychological issues and circumstantial moods. These situations often lead to “over-the-edge conflict” – conflict that if not truly resolved can destroy a unit’s efficacy, our working relationships, and the overall success of a university. In these situations, others observe our ensuing chaos with the infuriating inquiry, “Aren’t you supposed to be experts at this sort of thing???”

### ***Getting Back to Basics: Pretending We’re Not “Experts”***

Perhaps solving conflict is easier or more effective amongst those not aware of interpersonal typologies of basic conflict styles (i.e., based on Blake & Mouton, 1964). Maybe it really is better for non-experts. For relational professionals, our strength as competent interpersonal communicators results in our ability to manage and, unfortunately, to manipulate others – or at the very least, to recognize when/what strategies are being used on us. In these cases, perhaps interpersonal competency should be re-named or at least recognized for what it often is – politicking, manipulation, coercion and/or compliance-gaining.

Close in meaning, these terms are distinguished from “conflict management” by their inherent ethics. Understanding our own actual (whether helpful and/or selfish) interpersonal goals may aid us in ethically using our skills, while simultaneously strategically choosing strategies to do our job of making our organizations function. How can (and

should?) we use this interpersonal competency/manipulation ability to accomplish the politics necessary to hold a department (or institution) together?

### ***Dealing with structural issues.***

Clearly, in dealing with the activities surrounding education, we look to minimize the obstacles, make the tasks as approachable and realistic as possible, and solve potential problems in the most effective and humane way. But difficulties emerge (and so have different solutions) at different levels: structural and personal. Some difficulties are the result of the structure: curriculum requirements, scheduling, course expectations, prerequisites, advising, and outside demands. When the system is deficient, overly complicated, too demanding or too lax, attempts at reform and revision of the structure are appropriate and helpful.

Merely recognizing the difference between structural issues/discourse-level conflicts and inadequate performances/personal-level conflicts can help us respond appropriately. Responding accordingly encourages two things. First, it makes clear that it is our responsibility to look carefully at systems, students, faculty, and resources and recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and efforts. Second, it is a mistake and unfair to attempt to solve a performance problem by “fixing” a system which works well enough for those who do participate in it. Such adjustments often result in unnecessary and onerous “corrections” for everyone to attempt to compensate for the failure of a few who usually will not respond to new structures any better than the old.

### ***Dealing with hostage-takers.***

Sometimes people simply do not do their jobs, and fail to fulfill their professional obligations; this is a situation quite different from structural difficulties. Someone who does not handle conflict situations competently can drain the passion, energy, and desire to work together from everyone in the department. We know that positivity and control perceptions directly affect motivation to accomplish goals (Haase, Poulin, & Heckhausen, 2012). Essentially, one toxic person can hold an entire department hostage. Departments that function primarily using compromise tend to not make the best decisions and

may be overly cautious about presenting ideas, vote against poor ideas in order to avoid competition, and to help others not feel bad. The end result is poor decisions, prolonged conflict, and an overall dysfunction. In ongoing conflict, just as with serial arguments in couples (e.g., Bevan, 2014), it is the other party (and his or her role; Rahim, 1986) who predominantly affects our perceived likelihood of resolving a conflict.

No one is more responsible – perhaps unofficially and unfairly – for dealing with these issues than academic leader/s. Among us, we have personally served as department chairs; grievance officers; college- and university-level administrators; and chairs of curriculum, research, grants/funding, oversight, contract bargaining, and disciplinary committees for students and fellow faculty. Thus, we know that even when the conflict is caused and/or perpetuated by the communication of others, those in positions of authority (e.g., relationship scholars/departments or chairs) are the ones seen as affecting the climate (Porter, Wrench, & Hoskinson, 2007) or failing to resolve the conflict.

Although experienced at a small, private university, the following brief narrative reflection highlights themes common to all of us: face-needs, personal versus private goals, lack of administrative support or of clear institutional parameters for resolution, and role of organizational identity strain via community versus company.

*Our department’s Chair had been in that role for over seven years and had not been what many of us considered an effective chair. At the time, we were in no hurry to change leadership because many of us were pursuing our own research, personal lives, and faced with whether or not it was appropriate to call our Chair to accountability.*

*At our university, there are varying ideas on what conflict should look like, whether or not it is appropriate for a professional to engage in conflict among faculty members (especially within his/her own department), whether or not we should support and enable the person to help overcome any involved personal issues, and at what point it is more important to focus on a professional relationship to the exclusion of an*

*interpersonal relationship. There are high expectations for promoting a “community” atmosphere. For further context, our department was faced with not growing; we were stagnant and there was frustration at administrative levels that we had been at a standstill for 7+ years. The unhealthy result was that back-channeling began to occur. Obviously, this was detrimental to the working atmosphere, as trust deteriorated and coalitions formed.*

*Although the decision was made by 80% of department members that it was time to elect a new Chair, it seemed there was never an opportunity presented to reassess or suggest new leadership. We were all concerned about hurting this person’s feelings and operating within an organizational framework stressing community and “good relations.” Our communal avoidance held our department hostage, such that overall satisfaction and morale were at all-time lows.*

*Administration was not helpful as they believe faculty should settle their own conflicts within departments and do not often want to interfere. However, the situation in our department had become so dire that the Dean decided that we needed to bring in a mediator who would interview all members of the department to hear the different sides of the story. Faculty interviewed by the mediator made it worse, as they were not willing to undertake this task, felt they really had no choice but to be involved, did not trust that their discussion would be kept confidential, and were concerned about not being understood. The results of the very time-consuming process of mediation alienated us even deeper and our lack of trust with each other grew deeper still.”*

As is often the case in settings where academics believe they “know better” than outsiders, the mediation-goal of healing the department can actually create even more hurt feelings and anger, resulting in delay of an ability to even address the issue (due to academic calendars) for yet another semester. Years can pass while a department is impacted by anger and/or yelling, snide comments and sarcasm, with department members bewildered and “held hostage” by the behaviors of mere individuals.

As relationship-professionals, we are taught – and teach our students – to deal with conflict in ways that assume all parties are relationship norm-following adults. What do we do when they are not (e.g., as in Lakey & Rhodes, 2015)? Outside of a setting where we personally treat/counsel that individual, is it really our job to handle conflict with people who do not follow the “rules” of basic interpersonal decency? We are used to being told to “act professionally” and accommodate diverse individuals and styles. But what happens when “diversity” is used to cover a personal need for counseling, treatment, or skills-training? Reporting to authorities (e.g., Human Resources, Administration) that someone “needs” help to deal with his or her own issues (when seen as detrimental to the health of the department) can potentially result in allegations of discrimination or lawsuits. In academia, help-seeking too often results in victim-blaming; bringing problems to the attention of administrators can threaten the credibility of the competent departmental members.

Whereas conflicts at a structural level, focused on the discourse of an issue, can be procedurally addressed, personal-level conflicts are often housed in the language of discourse. An individual’s problems – whether treatable through vacation, intense counseling, or finding a new job – can be communicated in the otherwise-valid discourse of “department inequity,” “disenfranchisement,” or “injustice.” Far from being solvable as *identity-* or *relational-*conflict goals otherwise taught as solvable in an interpersonal conflict, the presence of true personal-level goals in a scholarly environment that values individual diversity make navigating that conflict much more difficult.

In academia, most of us do not work in an environment where problematic individuals easily (if ever) have their employment terminated. Therefore, if we continue working (whether by choice or through lack of other options) with these individuals, we must learn how to personally survive the seemingly uninhabitable departmental waters.

### ***Ancient Approaches to Old Problems: Saving Ourselves From Drowning***

One of the first things we teach our students is that conflict is not bad and in many cases can be incredibly constructive; it is how we manage it that

matters. Of course, those of us who are honest with our students then note that “it’s easier said than done.” A basic premise of conflict theory is that conflict is inevitable and not always solvable, let alone manageable. This is because conflict is never solely about what is on the surface, or content issues. Rather, identity and relational issues are almost always creating the waves. Thus, when working through professional or institutional conflict, it is important to remember that we often operate from incommensurate social realities (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997).

As noted previously, assuming everyone is working at the same “level” can not only hinder conflict management for all, but can begin to affect us personally – even those of us dealing with it “constructively” as we were taught. In these situations, it may be helpful to consider Eastern approaches to relational communication, which offer a useful lens for managing this incommensurability. Whereas in the West, we commonly focus on the cause/content of the problem, Eastern wisdom suggests “cause and effect emerge clearly at the same time” (Masunaga, 1975, p. 8), as illustrated with this Zen koan,

*Nansen saw the monks of the eastern and western halls fighting over a cat. He seized the cat and told the monks: “If any of you say a good word, you can save the cat.”*

*No one answered. So Nansen boldly cut the cat in two pieces.*

*That evening Joshu returned and Nansen told him about this. Joshu removed his sandals and, placing them on his head, walked out.*

*Nansen said: “If you had been there, you could have saved the cat.”*

-Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two (Reps, 2009, p. 21)

Using this story as a model for managing conflict directly challenges us about using the same old tools to solve the same old problem. Merely arguing about something is not a meaningful way to resolve an argument, which is what the monks are depicted as doing. Joshu realizes this and engages in a meta-perspective that does not use words to argue a

position. His actions demonstrate the recognition that arguments cannot be won by engaging directly in a conflict; it calls for different, new, and unexpected responses.

Thus, merely re-creating interactional, or even institutional, norms will not resolve problems. Although it is not one of the Western-valued conflict styles, because it is not deeply rooted in the individual defenses of the ego, letting go of the desire to win an argument and taking a meta-perspective can be a personally useful way of managing conflict. If the individual need to win an argument or be right is limited, it may even serve to decrease future conflict. As Chuang Tzu’s, *The Empty Boat*, indicates:

*If a man is crossing a river  
And an empty boat collides with his own skiff,  
Even though he be a bad-tempered man  
He will not become very angry.  
But if he sees a man in the boat,  
He will shout at him to steer clear.  
If the shout is not heard, he will shout again,  
And yet again, and begin cursing.  
And all because there is somebody in the boat.  
Yet if the boat were empty.  
He would not be shouting, and not angry. If you  
can empty your own boat  
Crossing the river of the world,  
No one will oppose you,  
No one will seek to harm you.*

Ultimately, we all know that our own desires to preserve identity and face-needs are central to conflict (e.g., Willer & Soliz, 2010); our sense of self is inherent in conflict. We live “in the midst of causation from which [we] cannot escape even for a moment; nevertheless, [we] can live from moment to moment in such a way that these moments are the fulfilled moments” or conflict-free interaction (Kim, 1975, p. 285). Further, allowing (or forcing) ourselves to move on, or to forgive our own mistakes (e.g., see Liao & Wei, 2015), can aid in the resolution of conflict, if only to make the experience (if not the conflict itself) manageable in work contexts. As difficult as it may be, when the situation seems untenable, sometimes we need to remember that there is no one on the productive-work boat and we must float on, or otherwise sink.

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## NEW PROFESSIONAL'S COLUMN

### An Anytime *Free* Career Coach for Women: Unveiling *CareerWISE* to the IARR Community

**Ashley K. Randall**  
**Arizona State University**

Undoubtedly, graduate school can be a stressful time for a multitude of reasons, from navigating difficult coursework to managing difficult interactions with one's graduate advisor. All graduate students, particularly women, encounter various professional and interpersonal problems that impact the career paths they choose. There are, however, specific tools and skills that students can improve upon to better equip themselves to successfully navigate potentially uncomfortable and stressful situations.

*CareerWISE* (CW) is a *free* online psycho-educational program designed to help women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields develop skills for addressing a variety of personal and interpersonal challenges throughout their graduate tenure. CW was developed and evaluated by Drs. Bianca Bernstein and Jennifer Bekki and colleagues at Arizona State University with the support of the National Science Foundation. CW is an individualized online program that delivers theoretically and empirically based content in an interactive environment that is highly relevant to the target users. The online training provides users with practice opportunities to help strengthen their resilience and coping skills so that they can more effectively navigate, in the moment, the difficult situations that invariably arise during graduate school.

#### *How it Works*

The CW resource offers educational modules and interactive simulations that help users develop specific skills related to self-understanding, personal and interpersonal problem solving, and communication. The program highlights skills in the context of four common concerns among graduate

students: (1) strengthening working relationships with advisors, (2) juggling academic and personal commitments, (3) navigating a climate that can be unfriendly to women, and (4) dealing with delays and setbacks that are common in the course of pursuing research. Further, the CW website offers interactive, live actor-based simulations to practice interpersonal communication skills for active listening, self-expression, and receiving and responding to feedback. CW also features over 180 HerStory video clips from interviews with women who have successfully navigated the hurdles of graduate school in a variety of STEM fields.

### ***Effectiveness of CW***

The CW online resource is based on sound methodological research from areas such as positive psychology, self-efficacy, stress and coping, interpersonal communication, and social cognitive theory (Bernstein, 2011). Furthermore, the effectiveness of the website's content and interactive components has been consistently demonstrated through empirical examinations (e.g., Bekki, Bernstein, Fabert, Gildar, & Way, 2014; Bekki, Smith, Bernstein, & Harrison, 2013). The CW resource has been shown to promote interpersonal problem solving skills, engender coping self-efficacy and resilience, and enhance the knowledge and skills associated with interpersonal communication. These skills are important in preventing interpersonal difficulties and managing conflicts more effectively. Although CW was designed specifically to address the difficulties faced by women in STEM and includes examples set in contexts that would be most familiar to that audience, the materials appeal to a diverse group of men and women across disciplines, with over 10,000 visitors to the site from 130 countries.

CareerWISE is available completely free of charge to anyone, anywhere, and at any time by simply visiting <http://careerwise.asu.edu>. No registration process or login is required to take advantage of the resource. For more information please visit: <http://careerwise.asu.edu/?q=about-careerwise>

*I would like to thank Amy Dawson and Kerrie-Ann Wilkins, current Counseling Psychology graduate research assistants on CW at ASU, for their contributions to this column.*

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## **HUMOR COLUMN**

### ***The Fairest of Them All***

**by David A. Kenny  
University of Connecticut**

In Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, the evil queen would look in the mirror and say "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" I am not a wicked queen, or at least so I think, but I want to ask you a similar question: "Relationship researchers, relationship researchers on the ball, what relationship is the most important of them all?" What do you think?

Without very much thought, most of us would say it is the person's intimate partner. (Do you not find it odd that we use the very same adjective to describe a close relationship as we use to describe women's underwear – "intimate" apparel?) This would seem to be the right answer. We may be a bit bothered to know that, in the United States, when a woman is murdered, the perpetrator is the husband or boyfriend more than 25 per cent of the time. However, that still shows how important that relationship is. We might also worry that for marriages (again in the United States), nearly 90 percent of married people say that they are currently satisfied with their

relationship, but over 40 percent of marriages end up in divorce. But, again, as relationship experts, we can make sense out of this seeming contradiction.

But this is not the right answer, or at least it is not what I, the “evil queen,” think. So if it is not the intimate partner, then what type of relationship is it? I can give you a clue as to the right answer: It is someone with whom we might spend nearly our whole life. You might think a good answer would be a sibling. We may be bleeped up by our “mum and dad” (see my fall 2014 column), but siblings are someone we can be in contact with nearly our whole life. I think that we all know of examples of siblings who were not close for most of their lives but they end up spending their twilight years together. But this is not the right answer, or at least so I think.

Maybe some of you think it is Jesus and others of you think it a service animal (née pet). I think that the fairest relationship of them all is actually one that relationship researchers do not even consider a relationship at all! So what is the right answer? It is “yourself.” Yes, a person’s most important relationship is with him or herself. I will do my best to convince you of this.

You might first ask how can you have a relationship with yourself? We need to realize that the self is “a socially constructed object” much in the same way that “other persons” are also “socially constructed objects.” You may know about Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund’s research on “objective self-awareness.” They studied the self, by having people view themselves in a mirror, making it clearer that the self is an object.

You might say that languages have a grammatical category of “person” and when we speak of the self we use first person and when we speak of others we use third person. However, there is a long tradition of speaking about the self using third person which is called *illeism*. In literature, this practice is quite common with one of the early practitioners being Julius Caesar in his *The Gallic Wars*. Among the recent characters in the media who speak of themselves in first person are Elmo in *Sesame Street*, Jimmy in *Seinfeld*, Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot, Mongo in *Blazing Saddles*, and Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid*. However, it is not just authors and fictional people. Real people do it too: the wrestler

The Rock, the football players Pelé and Patrice Evra, the baseball player Rickey Henderson, the basketball players Karl Malone and LeBron James, and the politicians Herman Cain and Bob Dole.

You want behavioral evidence? We all talk to ourselves. In fact, there are many occasions where the only way to have an intelligent conversation is to talk to one’s self. There are also several advantages in talking to yourself: First, you do not have to waste time in conversation explaining background material, and second, you are never misunderstood. It should be noted that thinking (what we now call cognition) is nothing more than a silent conversation. Thus, if we define talk and interaction as the primary thing that happens in relationships, then the self is the person we talk to and interact with the most. We have a relationship with ourselves!

Although relationship researchers do not consider the self a relationship partner, the fashion expert Diane Von Furstenberg does. She said, “When a woman becomes her own best friend life is easier.” An expert in another domain, Jesus Christ said in Matthew 22:39, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” I suspect most of us, not just narcissists, follow the advice of Diane and make self our best friend, but they do not necessarily take the advice of Jesus.

We can view self-esteem as a measure of liking, which measures how good a friend you are to yourself. Consider three items from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale: “I feel that I have a number of good qualities,” “I take a positive attitude toward myself,” and “I am able to do things as well as most other people.” Here they are rewritten for Vladimir: “I feel that Vladimir has a number of good qualities,” “I take a positive attitude toward Vladimir,” and “Vladimir is able to do things as well as most other people.” We see that we can view self-esteem as a measure of friendship. We can use self-esteem research to determine when the relationship with the self begins. Susan Harter has speculated that self-esteem begins during middle childhood and my own research with Brent Donnellan and others estimated it begins at age 11.189 years of age, at least in Iowa.

I came slowly to the idea that you could have a relationship with yourself. I had the idea that to measure a pure relationship effect in, say, how smart

Jon thinks Pat is, you need to remove the effect of how smart Jon thinks others are in general and the effect of how smart others see Pat as being. Sau Kwan of Arizona State took this idea to come up with a way to measure relationship effects for the self: in the case of Pat, take Pat's self-perception of her smartness and remove how smart Pat thinks others are and how smart others think Pat is.

I have left until last the question of sex, which I suspect many of you have already been anticipating, or perhaps dreading. Many of us are, as the characters on *Seinfeld* said, "the master of my domain." Alas for many, their only and, therefore, most satisfying sex partner is themselves. I have never seen it discussed, but I would presume that the self would have the same gender as the person. Then if we consider the self as a relationship, that makes most of us gay or lesbian or perhaps bisexual. It may surprise you to know that a good number of religious advocates of celibacy advocate self-pleasuring as an alternative to fornication. I wonder if they realize they are advocating homosexuality?

Somehow this column, managed to go from Snow White to here. I guess it is time to stop writing. No doubt most readers have stopped reading much earlier.

*Dave Kenny has recently links for several apps for Dyadic Data Analysis Methods at <http://davidakenny.net/DyadR/DyadRweb.htm>*

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Review of *Interpersonal Relationships and Health: Social and Clinical Psychological Mechanisms***

**by Lindsey Rodriguez  
University of Houston**

This textbook introduces the interplay between romantic relationships and health in an unprecedented way. Comprehensive, precise, and very well-written,

the topics covered were of both theoretical and practical significance. The chapters were interesting, relevant, in-depth, and critical to building relationship science and the bridge to health behaviors. It is clear that the authors took their time to give thoughtful consideration to myriad domains where relationships and health intersect. The interdisciplinary nature of the book is another major contribution.

The textbook is organized into four sections: an introduction to relationships and health, a more biological approach to relationships, a psychosocial section examining many topics of interest (e.g., Cooper and Zhaoyang's chapter on risky sexual behavior, Stephens and colleagues' chapter on managing chronic illness, Beach's chapter on couple models of depression), and a summary section that integrates where the field currently stands as well as where it has the potential to go in the future. The book was extremely comprehensive in its content. Many times, book chapters "gloss over" the science to make the book easier to read. I did not feel this way at all when reading this text. I felt confident that the findings presented in each chapter were an accurate representation of the empirical research. As a scientist, this was extremely important to me. I really appreciated the detail that was given to studies, the relative objectivity of the text, the specificity of the outcomes, the ease with which the authors wrote very complicated statements, and the focus on interdependence and bidirectionality within dyads. I also appreciated the focus on integration across levels of analysis.

The authors used theoretically-derived research questions (a plus for this social psychologist!) and were able to elegantly weave background and theory into the chapters. For example, in Cummings, Koss, and Cheung's chapter on interparental conflict and children's mental health, using emotional security theory as an overarching framework facilitated a deeper understanding of how the parental relationship affects the well-being (and subsequent behaviors) of their child(ren).

Although I did appreciate Murphy, Norwood, and Poole's discussion of alcohol as it relates to intimate partner violence, I must confess that I would have loved to have seen a bit more on addiction and relationships – it is a health-related topic that is also a burgeoning area of empirically-based research. There

are also many ties to other relationship-relevant topics (e.g., conflict and communication, perceptions, spousal control/regulation attempts, etc.). I also would have loved to see more on culture (independent/interdependent groups), couple's interventions (marital, as well as across the transition into parenthood), and/or influences of personality on health behavior beyond risky sexual behavior.

I think this book would serve as a great resource for a diverse set of targets, including medical professionals, psychologists (clinicians and researchers), and students. At a minimum, a higher-level undergraduate course on relationships and/or health in psychology and sociology departments. It would also be a great text for a graduate course in psychology or sociology. I also imagine this text would serve students in health professions and the medical school realm quite well. Finally, health professionals working with couples in a physical or psychological health-related context (e.g., diabetes, cancer patients) would benefit from reading relevant pieces of this book, such as the chapters on couples and cardiovascular disease (Smith, Baron, and Caska chapter), chronic illness (Stephens et al.), and cortisol (Slatcher).

In sum, I felt that this book did an excellent job of bridging relationship research and research in the health and medical fields, and that it has the potential to benefit students, teachers, and health professionals.

Agnew, C. R., & South, S. C. (2014). *Interpersonal relationships and health: Social and clinical psychological mechanisms*. New York: Oxford University Press.

304 pages, Hardcover, \$71.25 USD (Amazon)

## JOURNALS UPDATE

### Tentative Contents of Upcoming Journals

*Personal Relationships*  
June 2015 [Volume 22, Issue 2]  
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'I Know You're Kidding': Relationship Closeness Enhances Positive Perceptions of Teasing (GLEN GORMAN and CHRISTIAN JORDAN)

The Relationship Power Inventory: Development and Validation (ALLISON K. FARRELL, JEFFRY A. SIMPSON and ALEXANDER J. ROTHMAN)

Friends with Benefits? Gendered Performances in Women's Casual Sexual Relationships (BREANNE FAHS and ADRIELLE MUNGER)

Intimacy, Communication, and Aggressive Behaviors: Variations by Phases of Romantic Relationships (MARIA REESE-WEBER)

Insecure Attachment and Depressive Symptoms: Forgiveness of Self and Others as Moderators (KELLY YU-HSIN LIAO and MEIFEN WEI)

Are Sexually Permissive Individuals More Victimized and Socially Isolated? (ZHANA VRANGRALOVA and RACHEL E. BUKBERG)

Young Romance in China: Effects of Family, Attachment, Relationship Confidence, and Problem-Solving (SHARON L. DEITZ, JARED R. ANDERSON, MATTHEW D. JOHNSON, NATHAN R. HARDY, FUMING ZHENG, and WENLI LIU)

Attachment-Related Differences in Secrecy and Rumination in Romantic Relationships (ANNE F. MERRILL and TAMARA D. AFIFI)

Relationships between Preference for a Dominant Mate, Sensation Seeking and Trait Anxiety (GILDA GIEBEL, ANNE SCHAWOHL, JAMES MORAN and ROLAND WEIERSTALL)

Inter-Parental Disagreement over In-Law Choice (MENALAOS APOSTOLOU)

Schadenfreude as Mate-Value Tracking Mechanism: Replication and Extension of Colyn and Gordon (2013). (LEISHA COLYN and ANNE K. GORDON)

Recovery from Conflict and Revival of Intimacy in Cohabiting Couples (KAREN J. PRAGER, FOROUZ SHIRVANI, JESSE POUCHER,

GUSTAVO CAVALLIN, MICHAEL TRUONG and JENNIFER J. GARCIA)

Perspective-Taking Induction Mitigates the Effect of Partner Attachment Avoidance on Self-Partner Overlap (ROSEMARY E. BERNSTEIN, SEAN M. LAURENT, BENJAMIN W. NELSON and HEIDEMARIE K. LAURENT)

Shame Proneness and Intimate Relations in Mainland China (MATTHEW D. JOHNSON, LINH NGUYEN, JARED R. ANDERSON, WENLI LIU and AMBER VENNUM)

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Media Relations Committee Seeks Your Questions About Communicating with the Media

The Media Relations Committee is creating a FAQ/Tip sheet for members on how to effectively communicate with the media about your research! While we have fielded numerous questions about this topic over the years, we would like to gather more questions that members have about interacting with the media.

Please email any questions you have, or information you would like to know, to Jennifer Harman, the current IARR Media Relations Committee Chair: [jjharman@colostate.edu](mailto:jjharman@colostate.edu).

Once we have the FAQs gathered and answered, we will post this information onto the IARR website for your reference.

Thank you!

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### Call for Letters of Intent to Host IARR Conferences

IARR invites letters of intent to host a regional or thematic mini-conference to be held in 2017 or the organization's main conference in 2018.

Letters of intent are due in May, and you can contact Sean Horan ([SeanMHoran@gmail.com](mailto:SeanMHoran@gmail.com)) for specific calls for letters. Applicants are in charge of both local arrangements and developing the program, although these tasks could be divided among different individuals. In addition, assistance could be obtained from IARR members in nearby universities and related departments. Hosting a conference provides excellent international exposure for your Department, international visibility for the planners, and opportunities to work with relationship researchers from all over the world. Likewise, it offers a unique service experience and exposure for graduate students who may help faculty members plan the conference.

Questions should be directed to Sean Horan of Texas State University, Chair of IARR's Future Conference Committee: [SeanMHoran@gmail.com](mailto:SeanMHoran@gmail.com)

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### Talks from the IARR 2014 Melbourne Conference are Available for Streaming

Did you miss the 2014 IARR Conference in Melbourne this past July? Were you there but want to relive the excitement of the keynote talks and the New Scholars Networking and Mentoring panel? IARR is proud to announce that videos of these talks are now available on the IARR website: <http://www.iarr.org/2014-conference-videos>

The videos include the keynote talks from Chris Agnew (Purdue University; "Relationship Receptivity: Commitment in a Changing World"), Anita Vangelisti (University of Texas at Austin; "Beyond Sticks and Stones: Social Pain and Social Interaction"), Catrin Finkenauer (VU University Amsterdam; "Self Control in Relationships: Relational Effects and Processes"), Garth Fletcher (Victory University Wellington; "Love Helps Solve the Mystery of Human Evolution"), Kim Halford

(University of Queensland; “Romance, the Quantum Chip and Social Change: Strengthening Couple Relationships in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”), and Judith Feeney (University of Queensland; "Romantic attachment and responses to relationship conflict: Connections and complexities"; slides only). The New Scholars Networking and Mentoring panel features Q&A with Pat Noller (University of Queensland), Jeff Simpson (University of

Minnesota), Stanley Gaines (Brunel University), Emily Impett (University of Toronto), and Nickola Overall (University of Auckland) discussing issues related to the highlights and challenges associated with academia as well as important advice in navigating an academic career.

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simps108@umn.edu

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sprecher@ilstu.edu

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d\_perlma@uncg.edu

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jennifer.harman@colostate.edu

Dylan Selterman (Website)  
dylan.selterman@gmail.com

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seanmhoran@gmail.com

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d\_perlma@uncg.edu

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sdboon@ucalgary.ca

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gery.karantzas@deakin.edu.au

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garth.fletcher@vuw.ac.nz

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kelly@csusb.edu

## BOARD MEMBERS

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Lcampb23@uwo.ca

Denise Solomon (Publications Committee Chair)  
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adkunkel@ku.edu

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jderrick@ria.buffalo.edu

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ashley.k.randall@asu.edu

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Silvia Donato (Membership)  
silvia.donato@unicatt.it

Nickola Overall (Mentoring)  
n.overall@auckland.ac.nz

## EDITORS

Mario Mikulincer  
*(Journal of Social and Personal Relationships)*  
mario@idc.ac.il

Julie Fitness  
*(Personal Relationships)*  
personal\_relationships@uncg.edu

Justin J. Lehmillier  
*(Relationship Research News)*  
justin.lehmiller@gmail.com

Editorial Coordinating Group:  
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