

The Development of Secure Attachment After Attachment Injury During Childhood

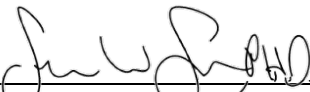
Kelsea Alohilani Imose

A Clinical Research Project presented to the faculty of the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology.

Honolulu, HI
April, 2020

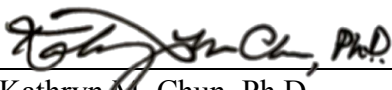
The Development of Secure Attachment After Attachment Injury During Childhood

This Clinical Research Project by Kelsea Alohilani Imose, directed and approved by the candidate's Clinical Research Committee, was approved by the faculty of the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology.

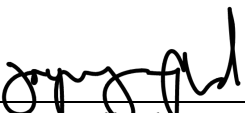


Sean W. Scanlan, Ph.D., Program Director
Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology

Clinical Research Committee



Kathryn M. Chun, Ph.D.
Chair



Joy M. Tanji, Ph.D.
Committee Member

April 25, 2020

Date

© copyright 2020

By

Kelsea Alohilani Imose

All Rights Reserved

The Development of Secure Attachment After Attachment Injury During Childhood

Kelsea Alohilani Imose

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu – 2020

Although there is a plethora of information regarding attachment styles in the literature, most of this research involves quantitative methodology and primarily reports the prevalence of insecure attachment, rather than people's experiences with having an insecure attachment style. Further, research on the fluidity of attachment style is almost nonexistent. This study focuses on the possibility that attachment style can be changed over the lifespan, and what needs to occur in order for this to happen. By exploring the experiences of those who have developed a secure attachment from an insecure one and identifying these critical incidents, there is a possibility for the development of interventions as well as self-implemented actions aimed toward improving individuals' attachment styles.

Keywords: attachment style, attachment injury, insecure attachment, secure attachment, attachment over the lifespan, development of attachment

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the ones that I have lost on this journey. Dad and grandma Tachino, I love you, and miss you dearly.

Acknowledgements

This research project, along with my entire graduate school experience has been the most challenging thing I have ever accomplished. Throughout this process, I struggled both academically and emotionally. I am so grateful to my Clinical Research Project committee – Dr. Kathryn Chun and Dr. Joy Tanji – who offered me their wisdom, their compassion, and their guidance on this journey. I am appreciative of the friends and family members who supported me throughout my education; my cheerleaders who always encouraged me and never let me belittle my achievements. Finally, I am thankful to my participants, CS and Monkey4, for allowing me into their lives and sharing their experiences with me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Situating the Study.....	1
Review of Literature	2
Influential Factors on Intimacy.....	4
Attachment.....	7
Emotional Intelligence	17
Attribution Style.....	20
Intimacy	22
How Attachment Affects Intimacy in a Relationship	23
How Emotional Intelligence Affects Intimacy in a Relationship	30
How Attribution Style Affects Intimacy in a Romantic Relationship	39
Summary.....	47
Statement of the Problem.....	49
Moral Praxis	49
Purpose of the Study.....	50
Research Questions.....	50
Grand Tour Questions.....	51
Significance of the Study	52
CHAPTER II. APPROACH	54
Rationale for Use of Qualitative Methodology	54
Specific Methodology.....	55

Role of the Researcher	56
Ethical Considerations	58
Purposive Sampling and Bounding of the Study.....	60
Data Collection and Analysis.....	61
Methods of Verification.....	67
CHAPTER III. EMERGENT FIELD METHOD	71
Pre-Entry	71
Review of Biases.....	71
Gatekeepers.....	79
Role Management	80
Entry.....	82
Gatekeepers.....	82
Role Management	84
Informed Consent Protocol.....	85
Constant Comparative Method.....	87
Semi-Structured Interviews	87
Data Security.....	92
Data Management	94
Transcription and Auditing.....	94
Peer Debriefing	95
Coding	97
Immersion.....	97
Peer Examination	99

Generating the Narrative	100
Member Check.....	102
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS	106
CS	106
Monkey4	133
Analysis of Both Narratives	157
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION.....	164
Conceptual Model of Findings.....	164
Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions and Extant Literature	165
A Securely Attached Relationship	165
Experiencing Insecure Attachment to Primary Caregivers	169
Catalysts of Change Toward Secure Attachment	175
I Created This.....	191
Clinical Implications of the Study	192
Limitations of the Study.....	194
Recommendations for Future Studies.....	197
Conclusion.....	198
References.....	200
Appendices	213
A. Copy of IRB Certification Letter (Argosy University)	213
B. Copy of IRB Certification Letter (Chaminade University).....	215
C. Copy of Initial Informed Consent Form (Pre-field entry).....	216

D. Copy of Final Informed Consent Form (Post-member check).....	220
E. Copy of Transcriptionist’s Confidentiality Agreement.....	221
F. Copy of Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditory Confidentiality Agreement.....	223
G. Community Resource List (for Information & Referral, and Clinical Services) .	225
H. Integrated Coding List – CS.....	226
I. Integrated Coding List – Monkey4	228

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The fluidity of attachment style in intimate relationships throughout the lifespan requires more attention in the literature. Is it possible to transform insecure attachment in one's formative relationships with parents into secure attachment in one's intimate relationships with one's partners? What critical incidents contribute to the emergence of secure attachments in adulthood? How do these critical incidents transform the attachment schema of the individual? An understanding of how and why insecure attachments can change would offer researchers, therapists, couples, and individuals a unique opportunity to continue refining a strength-based model of the science of love.

Situating the Study

To situate a study is to provide the personal context for the study being conducted. It means letting researchers and future readers of the study understand the researcher's personal stake in the study (Glesne, 2016). Along with the epistemology of the methodology being used, this constitutes the contextual framing of the study (Glesne, 2016).

My life experiences make my study about attachment important to me because I have developed an insecure attachment because of my parents' abuse and neglect, and have become increasingly aware that I behave in certain ways because of that. I want to better understand attachment, specifically insecure attachment and how it is experienced by people in romantic relationships because a part of me wants to know whether there are others who share my experiences. I also want to know how others have experienced attachment in the context of their relationships. It is a hopeless feeling believing that I have been one way for my entire life and that there may be no hope in changing it, and I would like to believe that conducting a study like this would help explore what the longitudinal experiences of others

are like, and whether there is hope. By studying deviant cases wherein individuals have experienced attachment injuries during childhood but developed a secure attachment later in life with romantic partners, I can explore the inner workings of the experiences of these individuals and hopefully ascertain knowledge on what it was about their experiences that differentiated them from the norm.

Review of Literature

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of the major research and theories regarding a specific phenomenon. In qualitative research, literature reviews are conducted for several reasons. First, they ensure that the researchers are not studying an aspect of a phenomenon that is already well-established in the literature, since the intent of qualitative inquiry is to build or refine theory. Second, a literature review reveals the gaps, or aspects of a phenomenon that are not well-understood. Identifying these gaps allows the researchers to narrow the scope of their study and formulate research questions that are geared toward filling them, and gives them a valid reason to conduct the study. This creates a context for the current study and allows for theoretical sensitivity; knowing what is meaningful to ask and avoiding type III error, or asking meaningless questions (Glesne, 2016).

The literature suggests that human beings are social animals who need social engagement and intimacy, or the feeling of being able to share thoughts and feelings while being unconditionally accepted in their lives (Mackey et al., 1997). In fact, Sneed et al. (2012) found in their 34-year longitudinal study that one's intimacy during the college years significantly predicted mid-life satisfaction, even when participants were no longer in contact with friends or partners from the past. The researchers contended that it was not only the level of intimacy they felt during their time in college, but more so the potential ability for

intimacy that predicted life satisfaction later in life. Similarly, Eryilmaz and Dogan (2013) found that young adults who scored higher on measures of intimacy, or relatedness, in their relationships also reported a higher level of subjective well-being on self-report measures. Another study that followed adolescents for 30 years into adulthood revealed that those who were rejected by their peers but were actively engaged in friendships during adolescence had higher life satisfaction during mid-life than those who were rejected by peers and did not have friends during adolescence (Marion et al., 2013). This suggests that friendship intimacy may act as a protective factor against the long-term consequences of peer rejection, such as lower global life satisfaction and decreased perceived relationship quality.

Furthermore, Mackinnon et al. (2011) found that those who scored high on intimacy with both friends and romantic partners, as assessed by relationship and friendship narratives during adolescence, also scored high on future generative concern, which was defined as a general concern for future generations. *Generative concern*, or *generativity* has also been associated with psychological health and wellbeing, emotional stability, positive parenting style, and positive affect (Mackinnon et al., 2011). Their results echoed those of Christiansen and Palkovitz (1998) who found that fathers who felt less psychosocial intimacy in their current relationships also scored lower on measures of generativity.

These studies also are consistent with the findings of Esposito (2015) who interviewed female inmates in Italian prisons and found that much of their distress, lower life satisfaction, and pathology was attributed more to loneliness and lack of social interaction than to dealing with prison life. Taken together, all of these studies illustrate that those who experience intimacy in friendships or romantic relationships fare better in terms of life satisfaction, subjective wellbeing, and future psychological development.

Influential Factors on Intimacy

Attachment

There have been several studies that examined the consequences of insecure attachment in regard to dysfunctional behaviors that impede intimacy. Those with insecure attachment styles appear to engage in more maladaptive and relationship-hindering behaviors than do those with secure attachment styles. Among these behaviors are infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Yumbul et al., 2010), psychological and physical aggression (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), and obsessive, dependent, and jealous behaviors (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Karakurt, 2012). Those with insecure attachment styles also tend to have lower couple cohesion and experience lower relationship satisfaction (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Graham & Conoley, 2006; Kazimierczak & Blazek, 2015; Riggs & Kaminski, 2010; Yumbul et al., 2010), which also disrupt the couple's ability to experience intimacy.

In their study, Pielage et al. (2005) found that participants' attachment security was associated with intimacy in their current relationships in that those with secure attachment styles reported more intimacy than those with insecure attachment styles who reported less intimacy. Similarly, Mayseless and Scharf (2007) found in their longitudinal study that boys with insecure attachment in their senior year of high school were more likely to report less intimacy as well as decreased capacity for intimacy three years later. Towler and Stuhlmacher (2013) also found that women with insecure attachment styles tended to report less intimacy and lower relationship satisfaction than those with secure attachment styles. There appeared to be a pattern in the literature of those with insecure attachment styles reporting less intimacy in their romantic relationships than those with secure attachment styles who reported more intimacy.

Emotional Intelligence

The literature suggests that there is also a relationship between emotional intelligence and intimacy in romantic relationships (Batoool & Khalid, 2012; Malouff et al., 2014; Zarch et al., 2014). It appears as though couples who are high in emotional intelligence seem to reap the benefits of increased communication, empathy, impulse control, and perspective-taking, which in turn fosters intimacy and increased relationship satisfaction. For example, in a study done by Batoool and Khalid (2012), a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and interactions in married couples was revealed. Their statistical analysis illustrated that emotional intelligence accounted for 48% of the variance in marital adjustment in the couples, and also accounted for 56% of the variance in conflict resolution. This suggests that emotional intelligence plays a large role in how people adapt in their marriages, as well as how they tend to manage conflict. Regarding the components of emotional intelligence, Batoool and Khalid (2012) found that interpersonal skill, empathy, optimism, and impulse control were the most reliable predictors of marital satisfaction. More specifically, Batoool and Khalid's (2012) study suggested that those who scored high on interpersonal skill, empathy, optimism, and impulse control were also those who reported greater levels of marital satisfaction.

Moreover, Brackett et al. (2005) found that among college-aged couples, those in which both partners had low emotional intelligence also scored lower on measures of depth in the relationship, support of one another, and relationship satisfaction. These couples also tended to endorse higher levels of conflict and negative relationship quality (Brackett et al., 2005). Additionally, the researchers discovered that in their sample, relationship quality was higher when at least one of the partners measured higher in emotional intelligence than if

both partners were low in emotional intelligence. Brackett et al. (2005) speculated that these results may be because emotional intelligence may assist people in more effectively managing their own and their partner's emotions and needs, empathizing, and understanding each other's point of view, which leads to more effective conflict-management and thus higher intimacy and relationship satisfaction.

Attribution Style

Several researchers have found a significant relationship between couples' attribution style and their overall relationship quality and satisfaction (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Collins et al., 2006; Durtschi et al., 2011; Gosnell & Gable, 2013; Graham & Conoley, 2006; Heaven & Cassar, 2003). For example, Kimmes et al. (2015) found that pessimistic (or negative) attributions for a partner's transgressions predicted relationship satisfaction, in that those with a negative attribution style tended to rate their relationship as less satisfying. The researchers also found that a husband's negative attributions were also reliable predictors of his wife's marital satisfaction. This suggests that it is not only one's own attribution style that can influence relationship satisfaction, but also that one's partner's attribution style can also have an impact on relationship satisfaction. It was speculated by the researchers that this may be so because of the relationship between attribution style and behaviors in the relationship, and the relationship between one's behaviors and partner relationship satisfaction (Kimmes et al., 2015). It was found in another study (Durtschi et al., 2011) that when one has a negative attribution style, he or she also tends to engage in negative behaviors in the relationship, which in turn may lower partner relationship satisfaction.

Additionally, in a study done by Hrapczynski et al. (2011), couples were assessed for attribution style, relationship satisfaction, psychological abuse, communication, and

negotiation before and after a 10-session cognitive behavioral therapy treatment. They found that those couples who exhibited a decrease in negative attributions also showed an increase in relationship satisfaction, positive communication, and decreases in negative attributions (Hrapczynski et al., 2011). These studies taken together suggest that attribution style can be associated with relationship satisfaction and communication in that those with negative attribution styles tend to be less satisfied in their relationships, and those who have fewer negative attributions may experience more relational satisfaction.

Attachment

Infant Attachment

The phenomenon of attachment was first proposed by Bowlby (1973) and was described as a way that the child bonded with its mother depending on how responsive and available she was during the child's infancy. According to Bowlby (1973), a child records in its memory these interactions as well as its mother's characteristic patterns and reactions to attachment behaviors, such as proximity seeking. After years of experiencing these same behaviors, the child forms a mental representation, or internal working model, of all of these exchanges and consequently forms mental representations of the self and others. Whether the child's mental representations are dysfunctional or adaptive is contingent upon all of the compiled memories of being either consoled or rejected throughout the child's life. It is believed that if the mother had been supportive and nurturing, the child would develop a healthy attachment to her and form positive internal working models of the self (e.g. seeing the self as worthy of love) and others (e.g. seeing others as trustworthy). However, if the mother was not supportive and nurturing, the child was predicted to form an insecure

attachment style and, subsequently, a maladaptive internal working model of the self and others (Bowlby, 1973).

Mary Ainsworth (as cited in Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969) began testing Bowlby's inductively-derived theory, when she introduced the Strange Situation, an experiment in which children were observed as their mothers left them with a stranger and then alone. The purpose of this was to explore the different attachment styles that materialize as a result of these differing mothering interactions. In the first of eight episodes of the experiment, the mothers and their babies were introduced to the room, which had a one-way window from which to observe. In Episode 2, the mothers were instructed to engage in free play with their babies for about three minutes. In Episode 3, a female researcher (the "stranger") entered the room, sat quietly for one minute, talked with the mothers for one minute, then sat and played with the babies for one minute. In Episode 4, the mothers were instructed to leave their babies alone with the stranger for three minutes and observe them along with the researchers, with the option of stopping the experiment if the infant became too distressed. In Episode 5, the mothers returned to the room and the stranger left. The mothers were instructed to stand near the door, outstretch their arms, and say "I'm back." If the infants needed to be held or comforted, the mothers did so. The mothers were then instructed to attempt to get their babies back to playing. In Episode 6, the mothers were instructed to leave the room for another three minutes, this time leaving their babies alone. In Episode 7, the stranger entered the room, comforted the infants if necessary, and attempted to get the baby back to playing. In the final episode, Episode 8, the mothers were again instructed to re-enter the room while the stranger left, stand near the door with hands outstretched and say, "I'm back." If necessary, the babies were held or comforted by their mothers.

Ainsworth and Bell (1970) focused mainly on the babies' behaviors upon their mothers' return rather than crying behaviors while their mothers were absent, as these behaviors showed confidence, or a lack thereof, in their mothers' ability to be available and responses during times of distress. Based on how the child reacted when the mother exited the room, when the stranger entered, and when the mother returned, Ainsworth and Bell (1970) identified three types of attachment styles: secure, insecure avoidant, and insecure ambivalent/resistant. Main and Solomon (1990) later recognized a fourth, less common attachment style: disorganized, in which infants behaved in erratic and variable ways, exhibiting behaviors such as avoidance, indifference, sudden back-arching and falling over, approaching and then abruptly moving away from the parent, and intense crying (Hesse & Main, 2000).

Securely attached infants showed anxiety and distress when their mothers departed, avoided the stranger while their mothers were gone but interacted with the stranger when their mothers were present, showed positive emotions when their mothers returned, and used their mothers as secure bases when their mothers were present. *Ambivalently attached infants* showed intense negative emotions when their mothers left the room, showed fear and avoidance of the stranger, cried more and explored less than other attachment styled infants, and approached but resisted their mothers when they returned. *Avoidant infants* were those who showed no reaction when their mothers left the room, were indifferent toward the stranger as well as their mothers when they returned and were equally able to be comforted by the stranger and their mothers. Finally, *disorganized infants* showed both avoidant and anxious behaviors such as crying when their mothers left the room, but avoided their mothers upon their return, or were inconsolable by either the stranger or their mothers (Ainsworth &

Wittig, 1969).

Ainsworth and Wittig (1969) postulated that these four different types of attachment styles were a direct result of mother-infant interactions. She contended that sensitive and responsive mothers were more aware of and able to fulfill their children's needs and were therefore more likely to have securely attached children. In contrast, mothers who were less sensitive to their children's needs, or impatient with or apathetic towards their children were more likely to have insecurely attached infants. More specifically, Ainsworth contended that ambivalently attached children were more likely to have experienced inconsistent care from their mothers and/or primary caregivers in which their needs were sometimes met and at other times ignored. Avoidant children were likely to have been exposed to unresponsive caregivers. These interactions with their caregivers led them to believe that communication with caregivers did not make a difference in their lives (Ainsworth et al., 1971; Ainsworth et al., 1978). Finally, disorganized infants were thought to have experienced loss or abuse, resulting in their conflicting and disorganized behaviors such as approaching and then suddenly fleeing from their caregivers (Hesse & Main, 2000). These studies (Ainsworth, & Wittig, 1969; Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Ainsworth et. al., 1971; Ainsworth et al., 1978) taken together have been the basis of attachment theory.

Today, attachment is measured on two dimensions: (1) anxiety, which corresponds to the resistance, or (2) ambivalence shown by the infants in the Strange Situation (Ainsworth, 1970) and avoidance (Brennan et al., 1998; Fraley & Shaver, 2000). When an individual is low on both dimensions, a secure attachment results. These individuals show minimal jealous, fearful, and avoidant behaviors. However, if either the anxiety or avoidance dimension is elevated, the individual is thought to have an anxious attachment style or an

avoidant one, respectively. Anxiously attached individuals tend to show many dysfunctional jealous behaviors, and fears of abandonment and rejection by their partners. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to show a large amount of self-reliance and avoidance of and discomfort with intimacy and closeness. Having both anxious and avoidant traits is typically characteristic of a disorganized individual, and these individuals seem to be at the highest risk for psychopathology later in life as many convicted criminals and those in the psychiatric population have unresolved disorganized attachment styles (Hesse & Main, 2000).

Furthermore, Malone et al. (2011) found in their study that adults who had experienced attachment injury (and thus likely developed an insecure attachment style) during childhood exhibited more depressive, anxious, paranoid, antisocial, narcissistic, and borderline symptoms than those who did not experience an attachment injury. In intimate relationships, disorganized individuals tend to lack genuine empathy, and show avoidant and fearful behaviors (Hesse & Main, 2000).

Attachment in Adult Intimate Relationships

As discussed above, children develop attachment styles based on how sensitive and nurturing their primary caregivers are during infancy. Typically, a child with secure attachment will have a working model in which the caregiver is seen as trustworthy, loving, warm, and responsive, and the self is seen as worthy of being cared for and lovable. A child with an insecure attachment, however, will have a working model in which the caregiver is seen as untrustworthy and unresponsive, and the self is seen as unlovable, unworthy of care, or as not needing care from caregivers. These working models also characteristically predicted on a collection of experiences wherein the child attempted to elicit a comforting response from a caregiver, and either received it or was denied it (Collins & Allard, 2001).

Riggs and Kaminski (2010) found that adult attachment style was a reliable predictor of relationship adjustment, psychological aggression, and psychological victimization in college students. In their study, Riggs and Kaminski (2010) administered to approximately 280 college students an assortment of questionnaires that gathered background information, recollections of parents' attitudes and behaviors, childhood and adolescent abuse and neglect, and assessed adult romantic attachment style, psychological symptomology, relationship quality, and interpersonal conflict resolution strategies. The results from their simultaneous and hierarchical regression analyses suggested that history of childhood emotional abuse directly predicted insecure attachment style, and that adult attachment style was a predictor of relationship adjustment, psychological aggression, and psychological victimization. Anxious attachment style, in particular, was a reliable predictor of both psychological aggression and victimization. The authors suggested that the connection between anxious attachment style and psychological aggression and victimization might be explained by the negative models of self that anxiously attached individuals hold. These relational schemas are associated with abusive behaviors in romantic relationships because a fear of abandonment elicits jealousy, anger, and aggression (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010).

Riggs and Kaminski (2010) also found that adult attachment style was also an important predictor of relationship adjustment, which they operationalized in terms of relationship quality. It was found that insecurely attached individuals had poorer relationship adjustment than their securely attached counterparts. Low relationship adjustment resulted in poorer relationship satisfaction and other negative emotions, which could cause even more dysfunction in romantic relationships, causing a vicious cycle of detrimental behaviors (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010). The researchers' hierarchical regression analysis also revealed

that attachment style almost nullified the effects of childhood emotional maltreatment on later relationship adjustment, suggesting that those who experienced childhood maltreatment but developed secure attachment styles might have a better chance of avoiding the pervasive intergenerational consequences of childhood emotional maltreatment. This study suggested that attachment style might be a mediator between childhood maltreatment and adult relationship adjustment, and an important factor in predicting future relationship quality and satisfaction (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010). Of course, this study was conducted using exclusively college students, which means that the results may not be generalizable to the general public.

Infidelity

Yumbul et al. (2010) conducted a study in which 150 participants were randomly selected. Participants were primarily well-educated and 80% were in a romantic relationship. The participants were administered measures of childhood trauma (e.g. physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and physical and emotional neglect), adult attachment style, self-esteem, romantic jealousy (e.g. jealousy level, jealous reactions, coping behaviors with jealousy, and causes of jealousy), and tendency toward infidelity. The researchers used an ANOVA in order to examine the relationships between the variables, and Pearson's correlation and an independent sample t-test in order to test for the significance of these relationships. They found that the more trauma an insecurely attached individual had experienced, the more likely he or she was to engage in infidelity while in a committed relationship. Infidelity is one of the most destructive behaviors in which one can engage while in a relationship and can cause emotional pain as well as dissolution of the relationship. Yumbul et al. (2010) could not find any significant differences in fidelity between avoidant and anxious

ambivalently attached individuals though, suggesting that whether one is anxiously or avoidantly attached, he or she is just as likely to be unfaithful in a committed relationship.

Allen and Baucom (2004) had a 345-participant undergraduate sample and a 113-participant community sample fill out questionnaires assessing their attachment style, frequency of extradyadic involvement (infidelity), and motivations for these behaviors. They used a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for the undergraduate sample and a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the community sample. The researchers also chose to analyze pairwise comparisons when attachment style showed a main effect in the samples, and a protected t-test in order to examine any possible interactions between gender and attachment style. In contrast to Yumbul et al. (2010), their results suggested that in both undergraduate and community samples, avoidant men were most likely to engage in extradyadic involvement, and anxious women were second-most likely (Allen & Baucom, 2004).

In their analysis of participants' reasoning behind their infidelity, Allen and Baucom (2004) found that avoidant individuals were significantly more likely than anxious, disorganized, or secure individuals to endorse a need for autonomy and space from their relationship as the motivation for being involved with someone other than their partner. Therefore, it could be speculated that avoidant individuals may choose to be unfaithful in romantic relationships in order to avoid complete commitment to their partners (Allen & Baucom, 2004). This would be characteristic of an avoidant person because avoidant people typically have high anxiety toward attachment-related relationships and situations and tend to try to avoid them in order to avoid losing the ones with whom they form close relationships. They also tend to prioritize self-reliance and autonomy and have a sense of discomfort with

interdependence (Allen & Baucom, 2004). Their infidelity could be a form of self-sabotage, where their avoidant attachment style elicits anxiety when they become too close to someone, so they engage in behaviors that will cause their partner to leave them.

In regard to individuals with anxious ambivalent attachment styles, Allen and Baucom (2004) found that of those who reported extradyadic involvement, a significant portion of them reported a need for intimacy or a feeling of neglect in their primary relationship as the reason behind their infidelities. Allen and Baucom's study suggests that due to feelings of rejection or neglect in their primary relationships, anxiously attached individuals tend to look elsewhere in order to fulfill their need for intimacy. Additionally, it might be speculated that they engage in infidelity in order to gain more of the love that they crave from multiple individuals simultaneously. Another term used to describe anxiously attached individuals is "preoccupied," as in preoccupied with intimate or romantic relationships (Bowlby, 1973). This preoccupation with intimacy and love may also be what is behind an anxiously attached individual's infidelity, as many anxiously attached individuals rely on intimacy with others to boost their self-esteem and self-worth. This was supported by the results of Allen and Baucom's undergraduate sample which had a significant main effect of attachment style such that those with disorganized and anxious attachment styles tended to endorse a need for self-esteem as a reason behind their infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004).

Attentional Bias

Despite results from an analysis of variance by Feeney and Noller (1990) suggesting that avoidant people tend to rate attachment needs as less important than do anxious ambivalent people, Dewitte et al. (2006) found that when exposed to threatening words (e.g., death, painful), attachment-related threatening words (e.g., ignored, rejected), positive words

(e.g., happy, satisfied), attachment-related positive words (e.g., proximity, security) and neutral words (e.g., universe, furniture) in a dot-probe study, both anxious ambivalent and avoidant individuals showed an attentional bias away from attachment-related threatening words.

In their study, Dewitte et al. (2006) asked 32 psychology undergraduate students to respond as quickly as possible to what position a dot probe was on the screen after it took the place of one of two words presented on a computer screen. Participants were then asked to complete a measure of adult attachment style in terms of anxiety and avoidance. The researchers hypothesized that avoidant individuals would tend to show an attentional bias away from attachment-related threat words, and that anxiously attached individuals would show an attentional bias toward these words. A hierarchical regression analysis showed that along with the expected outcome that avoidant individuals would show an attentional bias away from attachment-related threat words, possibly in order to avoid possible re-experiencing of emotional distress, anxiously attached individuals also showed an attentional bias away from these words. This finding was puzzling because anxiously attached individuals are typically hypervigilant to attachment-related threats, and were expected to show an attentional bias towards attachment-related threat words for this reason. This study was useful in revealing the attentional tendencies of those with insecure attachment, be it avoidant or anxious (Dewitte et al., 2006).

From this study, it might be conjectured that those who show an attentional bias away from attachment-related negative words could be doing so because they are attempting to avoid the emotional distress that they experience when they see those words. Avoidant individuals are known to avoid intimate relationships in general, and it is possible that their

avoidance extends to stimuli that prompt them to think about intimacy and interdependence, or being abandoned or rejected. As for anxiously attached individuals, who are known to be hypervigilant to real or perceived abandonment and rejection, their attentional bias away from attachment-related threat words may also be intentional. Similar to avoidantly attached individuals, anxiously attached individuals may show an attentional bias away from attachment-related threat words in order to evade the reminders of their past emotional pain. Consequently, anxiously attached individuals may be hypervigilant toward attachment-related threats, notice them quickly, and avoid them intentionally. The authors found that people with insecure attachments, specifically those with both anxious ambivalent and avoidant attachment tendencies, tended to avoid attachment-related threat words as a defense mechanism to protect the psyche and the ego from re-experiencing the past pain and trauma that they experienced due to rejection or abuse from primary caregivers (Dewitte et al., 2006).

Emotional Intelligence

The phrase *emotional intelligence* (EI) was first introduced by Michael Beldoch in 1964, but was popularized by Goleman (1996) who defined it as one's ability to comprehend the self and other, and to recognize and regulate emotions of oneself as well as others. Goleman (1998) suggested five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy, and motivation. *Self-awareness* was thought to be the understanding of one's own emotions, standards, ambitions, strengths and weaknesses as well as their impact on others. *Self-regulation* was considered to be one's ability to control and/or redirect negative emotions and adapt to difficult circumstances. *Social skill* involved one's ability to manage relationships. *Empathy* encompassed one's ability to consider others'

emotions when making decisions, and *motivation* was thought to be one's tendency to be determined to succeed (Goleman, 1998). Several other researchers' contributions to the construct of emotional intelligence are noteworthy.

In 1990, Salovey and Mayer categorized emotional intelligence as a part of social intelligence. They argued that emotional intelligence was "one's ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). They thought of emotional intelligence as having three distinct components: (a) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and other, (b) regulating emotions in the self and other, and (c) utilizing emotions in adaptive ways (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Appraisal and evaluation of emotions in the self included being able to identify one's own emotions and express them using verbal and nonverbal methods (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). *Appraisal and evaluation of others* included recognizing emotions in others through verbal and non-verbal cues as well as one's ability to empathize with another's emotions. *Regulating emotions in the self* was thought to involve self-soothing techniques as well as persisting during negative mood sets (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). *Regulating emotions in others* was said to involve the ability to elicit and diminish emotions in others, and was strongly related to impression management, or the ability of one to behave in ways that would lead another to have a positive impression of him or her.

Utilizing emotions in adaptive ways encompassed flexible planning, creative thinking, mood redirected attention, and motivating emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In *flexible planning*, Salovey and Mayer discussed the ability by emotionally intelligent individuals to use mood swings in a positive way; making plans for the future in a good mood, and

changing mood sets when in a bad mood. In *creative thinking*, Salovey and Mayer (1990) spoke of the changes in cognition when one is experiencing negative mood, and stated that those who are experiencing a positive mood are able to come up with more creative solutions to problems than those experiencing a negative mood. *Mood redirected attention* was defined as one's tendency to focus attention on problems that elicit the most intense emotions and away from those of less emotional importance. Salovey and Mayer (1990) posited that this component of emotional intelligence is imperative in prioritizing one's problems in order of emotional importance. Finally, *motivating emotions* were defined as those that lead individuals to work harder and persevere in difficult situations, such as anxiety or pride (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Petrides and Furnham (2001) conceptualized emotional intelligence as having two components: *trait emotional intelligence (trait EI)* and *ability emotional intelligence (ability EI)*. *Trait EI* was operationalized to include the behavioral and self-perceived aspects of emotional intelligence that are typically measured in self-report questionnaires, while *ability EI* was considered to be a measure of actual ability and psychometric intelligence (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Petrides and Furnham (2001) contended that since *trait EI* was related more to behaviors and self-perceived abilities, it would be connected to personality traits, and since *ability EI* was related more to actual abilities, it would correlate with cognitive abilities.

Mayer et al. (2004) later developed a four-branch model of emotional intelligence which included the ability to recognize, perceive, and express emotions (identifying); the ability to integrate emotions into thoughts (facilitating); the capacity to understand how situations can affect emotions (understanding); and the ability to regulate one's emotions (managing). Mayer et al. (2004) operationalized *identifying emotions* as the ability to

recognize emotions in others' face and posture, and express emotions using verbal and nonverbal methods. *Facilitating emotions* involved one's ability to use emotions to assist thinking, such as using anxiety in order to be more precise and efficacious while working on a difficult project. *Understanding emotions* involved the ability of one to analyze emotions, predict their trends over time, and understand their outcomes. *Managing emotions* was defined as one's ability to manage or alter one's emotions in order to achieve goals, gain self-knowledge, or behave appropriately in social interactions (Mayer et al., 2004).

Attribution Style

Attribution theory was first alluded to by Fritz Heider (1958) when he stated that people are inexperienced psychologists who are attempting to make sense of the world around us. He stated that people are inclined to create cause and effect relationships, even when one does not exist. Perhaps the most influential idea of Heider's was that there are two types of attributions: internal and external. *Internal attributions* are those that ascribe the cause of a certain behavior to internal traits, such as personality, rather than external influence. In contrast, *external attributions* are those that assign the cause of a certain behavior to a situation or event that is not in a person's control, such as a situation rather than an internal trait (Heider, 1958). Most simply put, Fiske and Taylor (1991) defined attribution as how one uses information gathered in order to form a causal explanation for events, behaviors, or situations.

Correspondent Inference Theory

Jones and Davis (1965) later developed the correspondent inference theory, which explained the process whereby people come to make an internal attribution about a person's behaviors. Jones and Davis (1965) stated that an internal attribution is more likely to be made

when people infer correspondence between a person's actions and their personality. It was theorized that individuals pull from five sources of information in order to make a correspondent inference: choice, accidental versus intentional behavior, social desirability, hedonistic relevance, and personalism (Jones & Davis, 1965).

In the *choice* aspect, it was believed that if one behaves on their own volition, an internal attribution would be more likely to be made. In regards to *accidental versus intentional behavior*, it was thought that internal behavior would receive an internal attribution and accidental behavior would receive an external attribution. With respect to *social desirability*, behaviors that do not conform with social norms would likely be attributed to internal factors and more socially acceptable behaviors would be attributed to external factors. Regarding *hedonistic relevance*, it was believed that if a person's behavior seemed to be intended to benefit or harm us, it would be more likely to be attributed to internal causes. Finally, in regard to *personalism*, it was thought that if a person's behavior seemed to be intended to have an impact on a particular person, it would be more likely to be attributed to internal factors rather than external ones.

Covariation Model

In 1967, Kelley developed the covariation model of attribution, in which he conjectured that people consider three types of evidence in order to make an internal or external attribution: consensus, distinctiveness, and consistency. *Consensus* was defined as the degree to which people behave similarly in similar situations (Kelley, 1967). If two people behave similarly in the same situation, they are high in consensus, and an external attribution is more likely to be made than if one person were to behave differently than the other. *Distinctiveness* was defined as the degree to which a person behaves similarly in

similar situations (Kelley, 1967). If a person behaves the same way in two similar situations, an external attribution is more likely to be made, rather than if he or she behaved differently in two similar situations. *Consistency* was defined as the degree to which a person behaves the same way every time he or she is in a specific situation (Kelley, 1967). If a person engages in a certain behavior every time they are in a specific situation, consistency is high, and an external attribution is more likely to be made for the behavior (Kelley, 1967).

Intimacy

Intimacy is a construct that has been widely studied and defined in various different ways. Sullivan (1953) described intimacy as the need for friendships and sexual release, and stated that mature intimacy involved prioritizing others' needs as they would their own. Later, Erikson et al. (1959) defined intimacy as a fusing of identities with others. He also emphasized the sexual aspect of intimacy. In 1991, Snyder argued that intimacy is an emotion state that involves feelings of trust, connectedness, security, warmth, closeness, understanding, and acceptance. Having empathy between partners was also considered to be an important aspect of intimacy (Wynne & Wynne, 1986). Along these lines, Lauer et al. (1990) suggested that intimacy is synonymous with companionship, and Johnson (1987) associated intimacy with emotional bonding.

Intimacy has also been defined as a result of certain interpersonal behaviors such as self-disclosure (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977; Derlega & Grzelak, 1979; Hatfield, 1984), and is enhanced when individuals share the inner-most aspects of themselves with each other. Lewis (1978), Morris (1971), and Wong (1981) also considered physical and verbal expression in the enhancement of intimacy in romantic relationships. Additionally, Hegelson et al. (1987) found in their study that those who had experienced feelings of intimacy often

reported behaviors such as self-disclosure, physical and sexual engagement, shared interests and activities, mutual appreciation, and feelings of warmth in these relationships. Similarly, Monsour (1992) found that college students rated self-disclosure as the most important indication of intimacy. These students also reported that emotional expressiveness, unconditional support, shared interests and activities, and physical and sexual engagement were characteristic of intimacy. Mackey et al., (1997) also found in qualitative interviews that when people spoke of intimacy in long-term relationships, a common theme that appeared frequently was a mutual sharing of personal thoughts and emotions as well as an unconditional acceptance of those thoughts and feelings. Qualitatively, it appears that Mackey et al.'s (1997) definition of intimacy best encompasses the extant literature, acknowledging self-disclosure, and unconditional acceptance of one's partner.

How Attachment Affects Intimacy in a Relationship

In Kazimierczak and Blazek's (2015) study, 222 married individuals were asked to place three-dimensional figures of themselves and their partners on a computer screen, taking note of the placement of the figures. The closer proximity of the figures, the higher the couple was rated in cohesion. Kazimierczak and Blazek (2015) also assessed the couples for attachment style and overall marital satisfaction. Their t-test results revealed that couple cohesion was significantly correlated with relationship security and negatively correlated with attachment insecurity. It was also found that in insecurely attached women, those who perceived their relationships to be more cohesive were more satisfied than those who identified their relationships as less cohesive. These results taken together suggest that when there were high levels of attachment security in a romantic relationship, there is a higher level of perceived couple cohesion, and when there were low levels of attachment security, or

high levels of attachment insecurity, there were lower levels of perceived couple cohesion. Although the possible reasoning behind these results was not discussed, the findings suggested that those with insecure attachments were more likely to view their relationships as less cohesive, and therefore more volatile or disconnected. Moreover, with decreased couple cohesion, there were lower levels of relationship security (Kazimierczak & Blazek, 2015).

In a review of a transcript from therapy sessions with a married couple in which both members struggled with avoidant attachment styles, Erzar and Erzar (2008) conducted a more in-depth exploration of the reasoning behind a lack of intimacy was explored. In the transcripts, both clients disclosed their troubled pasts and described childhood experiences in which neither of them was able to express emotions without punishment, and neither were able to communicate openly with primary caregivers. The therapist stipulated, based on attachment theory, that both clients carried on this feeling of being unable to express emotions or communicate while feeling shame and guilt for having emotions and resentment for not being able to express how they were feeling in their current relationship. This caused the two to argue and pull away from each other, creating a lack of intimacy between them (Erzar & Erzar, 2008). This was a single case study, but an important one that offered a glimpse behind avoidant attachment style and how it takes away from a couple's sense of intimacy.

Pielage et al. (2005) found in their study that those with insecure attachment styles were more likely to report less intimacy in their romantic relationships than those with secure attachment styles. Pielage et al. recruited 92 participants who were currently receiving outpatient psychological services. These people constituted the "clinical" sample. A "community" sample consisting of 121 individuals from the general population also were

recruited to complete mail surveys. Each participant was given a battery of assessments measuring attachment style, intimacy in romantic relationships, and psychological distress (e.g. loneliness, depressive symptoms, and life satisfaction). A MANOVA revealed significant differences between the clinical sample and the community sample in that the clinical sample reported higher rates of insecure attachment, and less intimacy. Moreover, a Pearson product moment correlation revealed that attachment security was correlated with intimacy and attachment insecurity was negatively related to intimacy in both the clinical (secure: $r=0.36$, $p<.0001$; dismissing: $r=-0.54$, $p<.0001$; preoccupied: $r=-0.30$, $p<.0001$; fearful: $r=-0.40$, $p<.0001$) and community samples (secure: $r=0.29$, $p<.0001$; dismissing: $r=-0.56$, $p<.0001$; preoccupied: $r=-0.20$, $p<0.05$; fearful: $r=-0.34$, $p<.0001$). These results suggest that those with insecure attachment style tend to experience less intimacy in their romantic relationships (Pielage et al., 2005).

Similarly, in a study done by Guerrero (1996), 80 romantic couples were recruited to participate, of which 15 couples were married, seven were engaged, the mean age was 22.3 years old, and the average length of relationship was 2.9 years with a range of four months to 11.5 years. The participants were brought into a laboratory and categorized into attachment style groups based on their choice between descriptive paragraphs of each attachment category, as well as a general measure that was validated by contrast measures. The couples were then asked to have a three-minute conversation about one of four topics that are typically a source of conflict between couples. They were told that the conversation was not limited to the topic they chose; rather, their choice was to act as a starting point for other conversation to ensue. A team of coders watched the interaction through a one-way mirror and nonverbal involvement behaviors and relational messages were coded (Guerrero, 1996).

Nonverbal involvement behaviors were rated on six dimensions: immediacy, expressiveness, interaction management, altercentrism, social anxiety and positive affect. *Immediacy* was coded on five measures, touching, gazing, body orientation, leaning, and proximity seeking. *Expressiveness* was coded using facial expression, gestures, and overall expressiveness by each partner. *Interaction management* was coded using fluency, or smoothness of speech, and response latencies. *Altercentrism* was coded using attentiveness and interest in the conversation. *Social anxiety* was coded on general composure, body relaxation or tension, and vocal anxiety. Lastly, *positive affect* was coded using smiling, pleasant facial expressions, pleasant vocal expression, and genuine laughter. *Relational message themes* were evaluated on three subdimensions: *immediacy/affection*, for example, when a participant appeared to be heavily involved in the conversation; *depth*, for example, when a participant attempted to lead the conversation to a deeper level; and *receptivity/trust*, for example, when a participant appeared to be open to hearing and understanding his or her partner. It was hypothesized that secure and preoccupied (or anxious) individuals would engage in more of the aspects of intimacy such as depth, or self-disclosure, affection, and receptivity/trust than avoidant or fearful individuals and that secure and preoccupied individuals would display more immediacy, positive affect, expressiveness, and altercentrism – all of which contribute to intimacy—than avoidant or fearful individuals (Guerrero, 1996).

Using a multivariate contrast within a 4 (attachment style) by 3 (1-minute time segments) mixed model MANOVA, Guerrero (1996) found that secure and preoccupied individuals showed more trust/receptivity than avoidant or fearful individuals. This suggested that those who are secure or preoccupied were more likely to engage in behaviors that showed that they were interested in hearing what their partner had to say. Guerrero (1996)

speculated that this could be explained by both secure and preoccupied individuals' positive regard for others, which could lead them to be more willing and open to hearing their partners out, whereas fearful and avoidant individuals tend to view others as untrustworthy, which could lead them to close themselves off to partner expressions. Supplementary analyses revealed that avoidance and fearful avoidance were both negatively associated with immediacy/affection, that preoccupation was correlated with depth, and that those who viewed relationships as unimportant tended to engage in less depth and trust/receptivity. All of these results were expected due to the statistics that suggest that those who are avoidant, fearful, or place low priority on relationships tend to engage in less conflict management, and avoid intimacy with others, and that those with preoccupied or anxious attachment styles tend to crave intimacy with others (Guerrero, 1996).

In regard to nonverbal involvement behaviors, specifically immediacy, Guerrero (1996) found that fearful individuals showed the least proximity, secure and preoccupied individuals gazed at their partners more than avoidant and fearful individuals, avoidance was negatively correlated with gazing and leaning, but positively correlated with body orientation, and rating relationships as unimportant was negatively associated with gazing and body orientation. These results suggested that those who are avoidant or fearful tend to show the least amount of nonverbal engagement during conflictual conversations, which was an expected result because avoidant individuals are known to disengage during times of stress, and fearful individuals may avert their gaze, distance themselves, and avoid direct body orientation because they are feeling anxious (Guerrero, 1996).

When looking at positive affect, Guerrero (1996) found that secure and preoccupied individuals tended to smile and show more pleasant facial expressions during the observed

conversations than avoidant or fearful individuals. She also found that avoidance was negatively associated with facial and vocal pleasantness, and preoccupation was inversely correlated with genuine laughter. Guerrero speculated that the former results came to be because of avoidant individuals' tendency to disengage and desire avoidance of conflict, and the latter result was possibly due to the anxiety that preoccupied individuals experience during times of stress or conflict. In regard to altercentrism, Guerrero (1996) found that secure and preoccupied individuals tended to show more interest and be more attentive to their partners during conversation than avoidant or fearful individuals. Supplementary correlations illustrated that avoidance was negatively correlated to general interest as well as attentiveness.

Taken as a whole, Guerrero's (1996) study revealed that during conflictual conversation, those who are secure or preoccupied tend to engage in more behaviors that foster intimacy than those who are avoidant or fearful. For example, those who are secure or preoccupied tended to engage in more behaviors that showed their partners that they were open to listening to what they had to say, such as eye contact and positive facial and vocal expressions, and illustrated interest in and attentiveness to the conversation at hand by leaning toward and moving closer to their partners. It was speculated that these results were so because avoidant and fearful individuals tend not to be interested in intimate conversation because of their lack of interest in intimacy in general (Guerrero, 1996). These participants were likely less invested and therefore less involved in the conversation. Furthermore, because avoidant individuals view others as untrustworthy, and themselves as self-sufficient, they may be quick to dismiss others' contributions or ideas in favor of their own, leading to less receptivity, depth, and immediacy/affection (Guerrero, 1996).

As interesting and informative as the results from Guerrero's (1996) study are, it would be important for future research to use a larger sample size and use observations from conversations that are much longer than three minutes. The researcher ascertained a hefty amount of information from this study, however, there were some inconsistencies in the data (e.g., hypotheses that were not or only partially supported) that the literature suggests should be fully supported, and these discrepancies could stem from her short conversation sessions. It could take more than three minutes for insecurely attached individuals to become distressed enough with the conflict to exhibit behaviors that are true to their attachment style. Furthermore, the fact that the conversations occurred within a laboratory setting also calls into question the genuineness of the participants' behaviors, since people tend to behave in ways that portray themselves in a more favorable light. Future research could possibly conduct these experiments in the participants' homes, or in a more natural environment for the participants, and require longer sessions of conflict in order to see the genuine behaviors from the participants.

Feeney and Noller (1990) administered a set of questionnaires to 374 undergraduate psychology students measuring self-esteem, attachment style, attachment history, mental models, love addiction, limerence (obsessive love), and love attitudes (e.g., eros, agape, ludus, mania, storge, and pragma). A factor analysis revealed that people with anxious ambivalent attachment styles may tend to engage in love and relationships in very extreme ways, including mania, obsessive preoccupation, emotional dependence, reliance on their partners, and agape love, which resulted in a large amount of self-sacrifice. All of these behaviors are not conducive to having a healthy romantic relationship, as most people do not

appreciate someone who loves them manically, who is obsessive, or depends on them desperately.

Feeney and Noller (1990) also found that out of their three categories of attachment styles (secure, anxious ambivalent, and avoidant), people with anxious ambivalent attachment styles tended to engage in push-pull relationships and held the shortest lasting relationships. Although there could be several confounding variables in this data such as relationship adjustment, couple cohesion, or infidelity, one could look at this and infer that the unhealthy and obsessive behaviors in which anxious ambivalent people engage could play a role in their short-lived romantic relationships due to the fact that many people do not respond well to obsessive or overly dependent behaviors, and tend to feel suffocated. Avoidant participants in this study tended to do as their label predicts them to do: avoid intimacy; self-reports from avoidant participants showed that they either have never been in love, were not in love during the time of the study, or that if they had been in love, the intensity of the experience was fairly low (Feeney & Noller, 1990). All of these results may suggest that those with insecure attachments are often involved in short-lived romantic relationships, and that this repetitious abandonment could affect their trust in the security of these and future relationships. What they may not realize however, is that their overly clingy behaviors may have contributed to their partners pulling away from or even leaving them.

How Emotional Intelligence Affects Intimacy in a Relationship

In Karakurt's (2012) research, the bridge between attachment styles and romantic jealousy was explored. The 306 Turkish college students were administered measures of attachment style, emotional dependence, self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, and jealousy. Structural equation modeling revealed that low self-esteem, dependency on a partner, and

feelings of inadequacy all play a role in the development of romantic jealousy. It was hypothesized that those with insecure attachment styles, specifically anxious attachment styles, would be more likely to need greater proximity to their partners and so might have higher levels of dependency on their partners than those with avoidant or secure attachment styles. They found that feelings about the self as well as feelings about others based on attachment style had significant direct effects on inadequacy, dependency, and jealousy. There was also an indirect effect on jealousy through dependency. This suggests that those with insecure attachment styles may feel more dependent on their relationships, which could mean elevated levels of jealous reactions. The findings also suggested that positive models of self and others were related to jealousy among securely attached individuals, who reported less frequent and intense jealous reactions. In fact, these individuals seemed more capable of regulating feelings of inadequacy and dependency, which reduced feelings of jealousy (Karakurt, 2012).

In a series of seven studies, Schutte et al. (2001) explored the relationships between emotional intelligence and seven aspects of interpersonal relationships, and a potential preference for relationships with those described as having high emotional intelligence. In the first study, 24 college students were recruited and given measures of emotional intelligence, empathy, and *self-monitoring*, which was defined as the ability to understand others' emotions, comprehend situational context, and adjust behaviors accordingly. A Pearson correlation revealed that those who scored higher on measures on emotional intelligence also scored high on measures of self-monitoring ($r=.59, p<.001$) and on the *empathic perspective-taking* aspect of empathy ($r=.35, p<.045$). They did not find a relationship between emotional intelligence and the aspects of empathy, empathic fantasy,

empathic concern, or personal distress. These results were replicated with an older sample of 37 teaching interns in study 2 ($r=.59$, $p<.0001$). The results of these two studies suggested that emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to understand others' emotions while applying environmental contexts to modify their behaviors to achieve emotional goals (Schutte et al., 2001).

In study 3 done by Schutte et al. (2001), 77 university employees and students were given measures of emotional intelligence and social skills, including social control, social sensitivity, social expressivity, emotional control, emotional sensitivity, and emotional expressivity. A Pearson correlation revealed that those who scored higher on emotional intelligence also scored higher on all aspects of social skills ($r=.41$, $p<.0001$). They were unable to find any significant gender differences in emotional intelligence or social skills (Schutte et al., 2001). The results of this study suggest that those with higher emotional intelligence tend to be more sensitive to others, take advantage of opportunities to establish interpersonal relationships, and be capable of assimilating with diverse groups of people (Schutte et al., 2001).

In Schutte et al.'s (2001) fourth study, they hypothesized that those with higher emotional intelligence would be better able to cooperate with others. Their sample included 38 school employees and college students. They were asked to fill out a measure of emotional intelligence and to complete the Prisoner's Dilemma Paradigm, in which cooperation benefits each participant, but there are opportunities for individuals to act in favor of personal gain (Schutte et al., 2001). Each participants' cooperation was measured in terms of how many cooperative responses they provided during a 30-trial session of the Prisoner's Dilemma Paradigm. A Pearson correlation revealed a strong correlation ($r=.72$,

$p < .0001$) between emotional intelligence and cooperation, suggesting that emotionally intelligent individuals were more likely to engage in cooperative behaviors during the Prison's Dilemma Paradigm than those who scored lower on emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 2001).

In the fifth study, Schutte et al. (2001) hypothesized that those who scored higher on emotional intelligence would report having more close relationships and more emotional involvement than those who scored lower on emotional intelligence. Their sample included 43 college students and church members with a mean age of about 25 years old. They were given measures of emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships. The measure of interpersonal relations included wanted and expressed *inclusion* (association with others), *affection* (emotional involvement), and *control* (decision making and responsibility taking in relationships). The researchers found that those who scored higher on emotional intelligence also scored higher on inclusion ($r = .31, p < .021$) and affection ($r = .29, p < .029$) suggesting that those with higher emotional intelligence tend to associate themselves with others and become emotionally involved with others more so than those with lower emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 2001).

In study number 6, Schutte et al. (2001) hypothesized that those with high emotional intelligence would also tend to have better marriages and higher marital satisfaction than those who scored lower on measures of emotional intelligence. They recruited 37 married health-care employees to take measures of emotional intelligence, a modified version of this measure to assess their spouses' emotional intelligence, and a measure of marital adjustment. A Pearson correlation revealed that those who scored higher on emotional intelligence also rated their marriages as more satisfying ($r = .51, p < .0005$), those who rated their partners as

having higher emotional intelligence also rated their marriages as more satisfying ($r=.72$, $p<.0001$), and those couples with a higher composite score of emotional intelligence also reported greater marital satisfaction ($r=.73$, $p<.0001$). These results suggest that not only does one's own emotional intelligence correlate with relationship satisfaction, but one's partner's emotional intelligence and one's perception of his or her partner's emotional intelligence also relates to marital satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001).

In the final of the seven studies, Schutte et al. (2001) tested the hypothesis that participants would prefer to be romantically involved with those who were described as having emotional intelligence. They did this by providing participants with descriptions of potential romantic partners who possessed various aspects of emotional intelligence such as recognizing and managing their own and others' emotions, then asking them to rate them on how satisfied they believed a relationship with that person would be (Schutte et al., 2001). The researchers found that participants rated the potential dating partner who was able to recognize and manage emotions in both the self and others as most satisfying to be with and gave the lowest average rating to the potential partner who was unable to recognize or manage emotions in the self or others (Schutte et al., 2001).

These seven studies taken together suggest that emotionally intelligent individuals tend to score higher on constructs that are believed to foster healthier interpersonal relationships (Schutte et al., 2001). It is important to recognize that those who scored higher on emotional intelligence tended to score higher on measures of marital satisfaction, empathic perspective-taking, cooperative behavior, and close relationships. These constructs are closely related to intimacy in that those who engage in these behaviors in their romantic relationships tend to endorse more intimacy in these relationships. However, because these

studies were correlational in nature, it cannot be determined whether emotional intelligence caused the participants to possess more empathy, self-monitoring, social skills, or marital satisfaction. Yet, it is important to recognize that emotional intelligence is related to all of these constructs. Future researchers may focus on obtaining a much larger, more diverse sample in order to acquire a more generalizable result, as the samples in the above-mentioned studies were small and demographically limited (Schutte et al., 1996).

Smith et al. (2008) recruited 82 heterosexual cohabiting couples, of which 67 were married, more than half had been together over 10 years, and varied greatly in age (20 to 80 years old). They were given measures of trait emotional intelligence, communication patterns, and self-reported relationship quality. The researchers hypothesized that emotional intelligence would be positively correlated relationship quality. They then used a pair-wise structure in order to find correlations between males' and females' scores and multilevel regression analysis in order to test for correlations of demographic information and relationship satisfaction, which did not yield any significant results.

Smith et al. (2008) found in their multilevel regression analysis that relationship satisfaction was reliably and significantly predicted by trait emotional intelligence, as well as participants' estimates of their partners' emotional intelligence. This suggested that it was not only one's own emotional intelligence that can influence relationship satisfaction, but also how one rates their partner's emotional intelligence. The researchers speculated that this result may be because having positive perceptions of one's partner may increase relationship satisfaction, or because increased relationship satisfaction may lead to more positive perceptions of one's partner. Lastly, it was found in this study that relationship satisfaction was predicted by perceived likeness in emotional intelligence between partners. The authors

conjectured that this result may be because those who view their partners as similar to themselves are more likely to be satisfied with their relationship than those who do not view their partners as similar to themselves (Smith et al., 2008). The results of this study were interesting; however, their sample was quite small, and the researchers were unclear about their participants' actual emotional intelligence. Future research may focus on finding a more objective measure of emotional intelligence, and how each partners' perception of the others' emotional intelligence correlates with their actual emotional intelligence.

Zeidner and Kaluda's (2008) also recruited newlywed heterosexual couples who were in early adulthood and married within one year of assessment. The 100 couples were given a battery of assessments measuring trait emotional intelligence, ability emotional intelligence, and romantic love. The researchers hypothesized that there would be significant actor effects and partner effects of emotional intelligence on romantic love. They found significant actor effects, but not partner effects, of emotional intelligence on romantic love in the participants' marriages. Using the measure of ability emotional intelligence, an empirical path model analysis revealed that one's own emotional intelligence moderately predicted romantic love felt towards one's partner. In regard to trait emotional intelligence, a path analytic model revealed that one's own emotional intelligence was related to one's own romantic love felt toward his or her partner (Zeidner & Kaluda, 2008). Although goodness of fit was adequate in this study, it would be expected that there are partner effects between emotional intelligence and romantic love, and it might have been Zeidner and Kaluda's small and demographically limited sample that resulted in their lack of partner effects in their study.

In a two-part study done by Schroder-Abe and Schutz (2011), the objectives were to examine the possible effects of emotional intelligence on the different components of

relationship quality such as satisfaction, closeness, and commitment. In the first of their two studies, Schroder-Abe and Schutz recruited 191 heterosexual couples to fill out questionnaires online. The mean age of the sample was about 25 years old, and a large fraction of the sample was comprised of psychology students who received course credit for participating, thus eighty-five of the couples were cohabitating and 23 of them were married.

Each participant was given a self-report measure of intelligence that included subscales “Self-Emotions Appraisal,” “Others’ Emotion Appraisal,” “Use of Emotion,” and “Regulation of Emotion.” They were also given self-report measures of relationship satisfaction, closeness, and commitment. A structure equation model was used in order to assess both actor effects and partner effects within each couple, and the researchers found that emotional intelligence was significantly related to relationship quality.

Unlike Zeidner and Kaluda (2008), Schroder-Abe and Schutz’s (2011) first study revealed that it was not only one’s own emotional intelligence that correlated with relationship satisfaction and closeness, but also one’s partner’s emotional intelligence. This suggests that it is not only important for one to be emotionally intelligent to experience high relationship quality and closeness, but it is also important to have a romantic partner who is emotionally intelligent as well (Schroder-Abe & Schutz, 2011).

In Schroder-Abe and Schutz’s (2011) second study, they were interested in finding a mediator variable between emotional intelligence and relationship quality. Specifically, Schroder-Abe and Schutz hypothesized that *perspective-taking*, or the process of putting oneself in another’s shoes in order to better understand their needs and change one’s behaviors accordingly, acted as a mediator between emotional intelligence and relationship quality. Eighty couples were recruited using advertisements, flyers and mailing lists. The

mean age of their sample was approximately 34 years old, and of the couples, 55 were cohabitating and 34 were married. The participants were sent questionnaires measuring emotional competencies and several other constructs that were unrelated to the study, and asked to participate in a laboratory session. During the session, the couples were given questionnaires measuring self-reported relationship satisfaction, closeness, and relational problems. Then, they were asked to discuss a neutral subject for 10 minutes, and then choose a topic of disagreement to discuss for 10 minutes. An experimenter watched the discussions through a one-way mirror and rated each partner on perspective-taking and affect. Interrater reliability was assessed using randomly selected raters, and each rater was blind to participants' questionnaire responses and the study's hypotheses. Finally, the couples were given questionnaires measuring state relationship satisfaction and closeness, and then were debriefed.

Schroder-Abe and Schutz's (2011) actor partner interdependence mediation model revealed that perspective-taking was, indeed, a mediator between emotional intelligence and relationship quality in that perspective-taking was correlated with relationship satisfaction and closeness through both actor and partner effects. In regards to partner effects on relationship satisfaction, Schroder-Abe and Schutz found that, for example, if an emotionally intelligent female took her male partner's perspective during the discussion of a source of disagreement, the male partner tended to be more satisfied with the relationship. This finding is logical in that it is expected when one feels understood, he or she is more likely to feel satisfied. Also, considering actor effects, Schroder-Abe and Schutz found that if the male partner was high in emotional intelligence, his female partner was able to more easily take on his perspective, thus increasing relationship satisfaction in the male partner. This could be

explained by the male's emotional intelligence in that when one is high in emotional intelligence, he or she is better able to understand and explain his or her emotions, and facilitate emotions in others to achieve a certain goal (Schroder-Abe & Schutz, 2011).

In regards to closeness, Schroder-Abe and Schutz's (2011) second study revealed both actor effects and partner effects of emotional intelligence on closeness, with perspective-taking as a mediator. For example, the researchers found that when one scored high on emotional intelligence, he or she also tended to engage in more perspective-taking, and experienced increased feelings of closeness to his or her partner. In regard to partner effects, Schroder-Abe and Schutz found that, for example, when a female was emotionally intelligent, her male partner was better able to understand her perspective, and the female partner experienced more closeness to her partner. The researchers speculated that this result may be because those who are higher in emotional intelligence tend to be able to better explain their own and elicit certain emotions in their partners, which could explain how their partners are able to take their perspective more easily (Schroder-Abe & Schutz, 2011).

Although Schroder-Abe and Schutz (2011) used adequate statistical analyses for their two studies, their results should be interpreted with caution. Both studies used a self-report measure of emotional intelligence, which is vulnerable to the tendency for people to portray themselves in a more favorable light.

How Attribution Style Affects Intimacy in a Relationship

In Graham and Conoley's (2006) study, a total of 58 couples were asked to fill out questionnaires regarding their attachment style, attribution style, life stressors over the previous 12 months, and relational quality. In a pooled regression analysis, husbands and wives were compared to each other, and then couples were compared to each other as dyads.

The researchers hypothesized that those with negative attribution styles were more likely to experience decreased marital quality when there was an accumulation of life stressors, while those with positive attribution styles were more likely to have increased marital quality in the face of life stressors. They found that couples who had negative attribution biases rated their marriages as less satisfying when they were faced with an accumulation of life stressors.

Although they found a relationship between life stressors and marital quality, it was discussed that attribution style was a mediator in this relationship, and stated that this relationship was negated by the presence of a positive attribution style and was exacerbated by the presence of a negative attribution style. Graham and Conoley (2006) also found that although couples with positive attribution styles did not experience increased marital quality during times of accumulated life stress, they did experience a higher level of marital quality than those with negative attribution styles. Overall, it appears that positive attributions can serve as a protective factor for couples during times of high stress, whereas negative attributions can serve to make couples more susceptible to decreased marital quality (Graham & Conoley, 2006).

Similarly, Durtschi et al. (2011) found that marital attributions can have an impact not only on marital quality, but also how individuals interact with each other in a relationship. In their study, couples were recruited from the Family Transitions Project (FTP), an ongoing longitudinal study being conducted in Iowa. Both telephone and face-to-face interviews were conducted, but data was only used for face-to-face interviews, where couples were also asked to fill out questionnaires assessing attribution style, warm and hostile behaviors, and marital quality, and have a 25-minute video-taped session discussing conflict, future plans, and time spent together.

Durtschi et al. (2011) hypothesized that both partners' attribution styles would correlate with their own experience of marital quality, and that marital behavior (warmth or hostility) would mediate these effects. They also hypothesized that husband and wives would influence each other's behaviors and that these behaviors would influence both their own and their partners' perceived marital quality. Researchers were particularly interested in the first four years of a couple's marriage, so they structured their data collection so that even though their study was conducted over a 10-year period, each couples' first interview was conducted one year after they were married, and their third interview was conducted four years after they were married. Only couples who were with the same partner for the entire four years were included in the study, resulting in a total of 280 couples (Durtschi et al., 2011).

A Pearson's correlation was used in order to examine the relationships between the husbands' and wives' scores on each of the variables within and between couples. Durtschi et al. (2011) found that not only did couples' attribution styles correlate with their marital quality, it also correlated with their behaviors. For example, when a wife had a negative attribution style, she was more likely to engage in hostile behaviors whereas a husband with a positive attribution style was more likely to engage in warm behaviors. There were also significant relationships in parallel constructs between husbands and wives; husbands who rated their marital quality low had wives who rated their marital quality as low and wives who had negative attribution styles had husbands who had negative attribution styles. This study suggests that negative attributions can contribute to husbands' and wives' hostile behaviors, and in turn negatively affect marital quality. It also illustrated that it does not need to be one's own attributions that can affect behaviors and marital quality, but it is possible

that one's partner's negative attributions could affect the partner's behaviors or perceived marital quality (Durtschi et al., 2011).

Similarly, in a study done by Osterhout et al. (2011) hypothesized that maladaptive attribution, or a tendency to make negative attributions, would predict negative and positive behaviors during problem-solving situations in that those with negative attributions will behave negatively and vice versa. Osterhout et al. conducted their study using 43, primarily Caucasian, engaged couples. Participants were given measures of demographic information, marital satisfaction, and marital problems. The problems reported on the measure of marital problems were used to choose topics to discuss during a three-hour laboratory session. In the session, couples were asked to discuss the two problems that they chose for 10 minutes each. They were then asked to fill out a measure of attribution style. The discussions were coded using the Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989) and discussions were coded in 5-second intervals for each participant for positive behaviors such as humor, affection or interest, or negative behaviors such as disgust, contempt, or scorn. Interrater reliability was established and maintained by conducting weekly coding training sessions where raters coded the same sample videotapes and interrater reliability was .80 or above for three consecutive videotapes.

Osterhout et al. (2011) ran a Pearson correlation and found that men's responsibility attributions, or the tendency to assign fault and intentionality to a behavior or event, concerning their own topic discussion were associated with their own lowered relationship satisfaction ($r = -0.31$) and men's causal attributions, or the tendency to identify the cause of an event or partner behavior, concerning their partner's topic discussion were correlated with their own decreased relationship satisfaction ($r = -0.38$). Furthermore, a hierarchical linear

model revealed that negative attributions made by men were correlated with negative behaviors from both partners. This suggests that when males make negative attributions about their partners' behaviors, they tend to behave in negative ways and elicit negative behavior from their partners as well (Osterhout et al., 2011). Moreover, the study revealed that negative attributions are negatively correlated with positive behaviors, suggesting not only that couples tend to exhibit more negative behaviors when pessimistic attributions are made, but that they tend to decrease the frequency of their positive behaviors as well (Osterhout et al., 2011).

Overall this was a well-designed study. However, future research may consider a more diverse sample. Osterhout et al. (2011) used a sample of 43 Caucasian engaged couples for this study. Replication of this study with married or cohabitating couples may make the study more comparable to other studies. Furthermore, it might be more ideal to administer the measures of attribution style prior to the conflictual discussions, as a disagreement may have primed participants to respond differently than they would have if they had a more neutral disposition rather than being agitated.

Although the partners of those with insecure attachment styles may attempt to provide support for them, these efforts may go unnoticed, and may even cause distress to the insecurely attached individual. In their study, Gosnell and Gable (2013) asked 39 couples recruited through a university paid subject pool to record positive events experienced with their partners, their perceptions of their partners' responses to these events, and relationship and life satisfaction for 10 days. With each entry into their diary, the participants were also asked to rate how important the event was to them and how they felt as a result of their partners' response. They hypothesized that anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals

would perceive less support in their partners' responses and have more negative emotional responses to their partners' responses. Also, it was hypothesized that anxiety would moderate the association between perceived support and relational outcomes, meaning that if an anxious individual felt supported by his or her partner, the individual would experience increased life and relationship satisfaction and vice versa.

Gosnell and Gable (2013) used a nested structure model in order to analyze the daily diary inputs within each individual and within the couple. Multi-level models were then used in order to account for the nested structure. Gosnell and Gable found that insecure attachment orientation might affect how individuals perceived and responded to partner support, and how these processes affected daily relationships and personal well-being. Individuals with insecure attachment style was expected to be less likely to perceive support from a partner despite its presence and therefore feel unhappy as well as unsupported (Gosnell & Gable, 2013). The researcher conjectured that these individuals might not be receptive to positive feedback and support because they might not have been exposed to it during childhood, contributing to their insecure attachments. Since support may not have fit into their internal working model of what a caregiver is expected to do, it will likely go disregarded. Those with anxious attachment styles might tend to feel negative emotions even when their partners attempt to capitalize on positive events. Although they might have recognized what their partner's intentions were, they might feel misunderstood and therefore not feel supported or validated (Gosnell & Gable, 2013). The researchers conjectured that these people might also tend to feel ashamed and indebted to their partners when shown especially supportive or responsive reactions to positive events. Those with avoidant attachment styles were expected

to feel unappreciated and somewhat embarrassed in response to their partners' attempts to validate and support them (Gosnell & Gable, 2013).

In a study done by Collins and Feeney (2004), 95 couples were recruited from introductory psychology courses at a university and one person from each dyad was identified as the "caregiver" who provided support or nonsupport for the "support recipient." In this part of the study, the messages that were given from the caregiver to the support recipient were standardized, pre-established messages written by the researchers. Collins and Feeney's hierarchical regression analysis revealed that when given an ambiguous or "low-support" message by partners during a stressful task, insecurely attached participants tended to view not only that message as unsupportive, but also rated the interaction with their partner prior to the task as unsupportive, and did not perform as well on the stressful task as their secure counterparts. The authors concluded that people with anxious ambivalent attachment styles tended to assume negative intentions behind even positive messages due to their faulty working model of attachment figures (Collins & Feeney, 2004).

In the second part of Collins and Feeney's (2004) study, the insecurely attached participants were given messages containing genuine support from their partners, rather than standardized messages written by the researchers. The insecurely attached participants saw the messages as unsupportive and showed that even though their partners meant well, there was not much that they could have done to support their insecurely attached partners. Insecurely attached partners read their messages through a lens that was unconsciously modified and tainted by poor working models of attachment (Collins & Feeney, 2004).

Collins et al. (2006) conducted an analogue study in which 181 introductory psychology college students were given vignettes containing negative partner behaviors that

were meant to violate attachment-related needs (e.g., “your partner wanted to spend the evening alone”). They were asked to imagine that their partner was the subject of the vignette, and then they were given four possible explanations for the behavior to choose from. Two of the options given were relationship-enhancing (e.g., “my partner is tired and just needs some time to relax at home”) or relationship-threatening (e.g., “my partner is losing interest in me”) to choose as the likely reasoning behind their partners’ behavior.

Collins et al. (2006) found that secure, avoidant, and anxious ambivalent participants attributed and responded differently to partner transgressions in different domains. For example, when anxious ambivalent participants were asked to imagine that their partners did not respond to their affections or that their partners did not comfort them when they were feeling down, they responded with more negative emotions and anxiety than did avoidant and secure individuals. It was also found that when given attribution options to explain why a partner may have engaged in these transgressions, anxious ambivalent individuals were more likely to choose attributions that were relationship-threatening rather than relationship-enhancing. Moreover, they were also speculated to rate attachment needs as more important and experience more emotional distress when these important needs are not met. This was suggested to cause them to blame their partners for the threat to the relationship, and engage in punishing behaviors in order to ensure that transgressions like these did not occur again.

Overall, this study showed that when the attachment needs of anxious ambivalent people are not met, it is likely that they will respond negatively, attributing the transgression to relationship-threatening reasons, blaming their partners, and punishing them possibly with anger or destructive behaviors because they cannot control their partners (Collins et al., 2006). Avoidant individuals responded to those same vignettes with more indifference,

presumably because they deemed their attachment needs as less important and, therefore, were less dependent on them. Most importantly, this study suggests that an insecurely attached individual's feelings of security may be extremely unstable and can be compromised even in benign situations because of their tendency to make relationship-threatening attributions. Regardless of whether the security in the relationship is real or perceived, the experience of the individual is still one in which the relationship does not feel secure.

Summary

In short, intimacy, or the sharing of personal thoughts and emotions and unconditional acceptance of these thoughts and feelings (Mackey et al., 1997) is an important construct to understand when considering the emotional and psychological wellbeing of human beings (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 1998; Eryilmaz & Dogan, 2013; Esposito, 2015; Mackinnon et al., 2011; Marion et al., 2013; Sneed et al., 2012). It has been revealed that those who experience intimacy with others throughout their lifetime show higher rates of life satisfaction (Esposito, 2015; Mackinnon et al., 2011; Sneed et al., 2012), wellbeing (Eryilmaz & Dogan, 2013; Mackinnon et al., 2011), perceived relationship quality later in life (Marion et al., 2013), future concern for younger generations (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 1998; Mackinnon et al., 2011), emotional stability, positive parenting style, and positive affect (Mackinnon et al., 2011).

There are several factors that have been shown to have a relationship with intimacy in romantic relationships. More importantly to this study, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and attribution style have been cited in the literature as being correlated with intimacy. Attachment style was first introduced by Bowlby (1973), and later infants were classified by Ainsworth and Wittig (1969) and Main and Solomon (1990) as either *secure*,

anxious ambivalent, anxious avoidant, or disorganized. These styles of attachment seem to be perpetuated into adulthood and predict relationship adjustment, psychological aggression, psychological victimization (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Yumbul et al., 2010), hypervigilance and avoidance of attachment-threat related words (Dewitte et al., 2006).

In regard to attachment style and its relationship with intimacy, studies have revealed that those with insecure attachment style tend to rate their relationships as less satisfying (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), less intimate (Pielage et al. 2005) and less cohesive (Kazimierczak & Blakek, 2015). Moreover, those with insecure attachment styles were more likely than their securely attached counterparts to behave in ways that are detrimental to relationships such as infidelity (Allen & Baucom, 2004, Yumbul et al., 2010), psychological and physical aggression (Riggs & Kaminski, 2010), obsessive and dependent behaviors (Feeney & Noller, 1990), and making negative attributions (Collins et al., 2006).

Emotional intelligence is thought of as having four components: the ability to recognize, perceive and express emotions, the ability to integrate emotions into thoughts, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to understand how emotions can influence situations (Mayer et al., 2004). Emotional intelligence is thought to correlate with intimacy in relationships in that those who are low in emotional intelligence tend to experience more conflict (Batool & Khalid, 2012; Brackett et al., 2005), and less depth, support, empathy, optimism, impulse control, and relationship quality (Brackett et al., 2005). These researchers speculated that this decrease in relationship quality is likely attributable to the lack of ability in managing emotions, empathizing, and understanding other's emotions. Furthermore, those who scored higher on emotional intelligence also tended to score higher on measures of

marital satisfaction, empathic perspective-taking, cooperative behavior, and close relationships (Schutte et al., 2001), all of which contribute to intimacy in romantic relationships.

Attribution style is the way in which individuals gather information in order to form causal explanations for events, behaviors, and situations (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), and consists of internal and external attributions (Heider, 1958). Attribution style also appears to have a significant relationship with intimacy in romantic relationships. It was found that those who tend to make negative, or pessimistic, attributions also tend to have lower relationship satisfaction (Kimmes et al., 2015), positive communication (Hrapczynski et al., 2011), more relationship-threatening behaviors such as hostility (Durschi et al., 2011; Osterhout et al., 2011), and more negative communication and conflict (Hrapczynski et al., 2011; Osterhout et al., 2011). Furthermore, those with negative attribution styles also tend to view their partners as unsupportive or unresponsive (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Gosnell & Gable, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Although healthy attachment styles and attachment injuries may manifest, what is less known is whether attachment can change over the lifespan, and what critical incidents may facilitate this transformation. Thus, it was the intent of this qualitative clinical research project to begin exploring the intricacies of an atypical case study wherein an individual who has experienced attachment injuries during childhood eventually developed a secure attachment style in his or her romantic relationships in adulthood.

Moral Praxis

It has been established in the literature that those who have insecure attachment styles are more prone to engaging in maladaptive behaviors while in romantic relationships, and

that having close, secure intimate relationships is beneficial for general wellbeing. Studying the possibility of the development of more secure attachment styles in romantic relationships is important for those who have insecure attachment styles and those who treat these individuals. Exploring the mechanisms by which insecure attachment may be changed to secure attachment could improve the relationships and general wellbeing of those who struggle with insecure attachment. The current literature is primarily quantitative in nature, and only reports the prevalence of insecure and secure attachment, and the behavioral tendencies and relationship prognosis of those with insecure attachment. The present study aimed to investigate what can possibly be done to assist those with insecure attachment styles to develop more secure attachment styles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this retrospective study was to explore the development of attachment style for two individuals who have experienced attachment injuries during childhood but developed secure attachments in adult romantic relationships using a transcendental phenomenological approach. The result is a narrative of the critical attachment experiences of these individuals. *Attachment style* was provisionally defined as the way in which an individual conceptualizes, values, and behaves within intimate relationships.

Research Questions

What constitutes a secure attachment from the perspective of someone who experienced insecure attachment in his or her childhood?

What is the experience of an insecure attachment with a primary caregiver? What is the experience of a secure attachment with an intimate partner?

What are the critical events experienced by an individual who has established a secure attachment with an intimate partner despite attachment injuries in his or her primary relationships with parents?

What critical events have these individuals experienced that acted as a catalyst of change to develop a secure attachment despite attachment injuries in his or her relationship with primary caregivers?

What is the significance of attachment for someone with a secure attachment with his or her intimate partner despite experiencing attachment injuries with primary caregivers as a child?

Grand Tour Questions

Grand tour questions are colloquial derivatives of the research questions of a study. They are called “grand tour questions” because they are designed to encourage participants to share their genuine experiences with a phenomenon by allowing them to lead the conversation, rather than the researcher using a structured interview template to lead the participant possibly to the researchers’ own biases and conclusions (Spradley, 1979).

Grand tour questions are important to qualitative inquiry because researchers wish to collect the richest possible data from the participants, which means digging deeply into the heart of their experiences in great detail. By inquiring about participants’ thoughts, feelings, behaviors, intentions, and experiences along with the process of development of all of these things, grand tour questions facilitate this process (Spradley, 1979).

1. Descriptive questions: Describe your relationship with your partner. Describe what I would observe about the way the two of you interact together (When in private? When in public?)

2. Are there any predictable patterns that you can identify in your relationships? What do you think is involved in these patterns?
3. Experiential questions: Describe some important experiences you have had with your partner that have contributed to the relationship you have developed.
4. Process questions: Describe an experience you had as a child with your parents that you would say was fairly typical of that relationship. Describe an experience you had in your teens with your parents that you would say was fairly typical of that relationship. Describe an experience you had recently with your parents that you would say was fairly typical of that relationship.
5. Meaning questions: What does your relationship today mean to you? What has your relationship with your parents meant to you?
6. How do you feel about the differences between your past relationships with your parents and your relationship now?

Significance of the Study

This qualitative clinical research project not only explored the efficacy of a proposed testing methodology for studying the transformation of attachment schema, it also began to explore the nature of this process of change. To do so, it explored the experiences of two participants who represent two atypical cases in which a child insecurely attached to his or her parents developed into a securely attached adult with his or her romantic partners. The intention was to highlight some of the experiences that led the participants to this transformation of attachment schema. This adds to the utility of the study in that the results were intended to add to the current body of research and knowledge base about the potential

fluidity of attachment style. Furthermore, the present study aimed to present results that are useful, easy to use, and applicable in the field (Glesne, 2016).

Those who have experienced attachment injuries during childhood, those whose insecure attachment styles persisted into adulthood, and parents with insecure attachment styles who fear that their behaviors will negatively affect their children may come to better understand themselves and their experiences and find solace and enlightenment in the results of this study.

Attachment researchers also may find these anomalies to a potential source of questions that need to be answered. Even when acknowledging gaps in the research, there will always be new questions that arise out of the new information. This could help to give researchers new inspiration or insight into what aspect of the phenomenon to explore.

Finally, clinicians in the field of psychology, program developers, and those involved in training couples' therapists may also find this study beneficial because its results could inform new avenues of treatment for those with insecure attachment as well as for couples whose problems stem from insecure attachment style. This could lead to more effective treatment modalities for these populations.

CHAPTER II. APPROACH

Rationale for Use of Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative inquiry involves a process of studying a specific phenomenon in which there may be common as well as divergent patterns. Qualitative research inductively derives themes that may be both idiographic and relevant to others in a population. Each participants' stories can inform theory about others who have shared experiences with a phenomenon. Qualitative inquiry also tends to focus on the processes and reasoning behind phenomena rather than just reporting the prevalence of a particular phenomenon (Glesne, 2016).

Qualitative inquiry differs from quantitative inquiry in that quantitative inquiry assumes that variables are discrete and measurable, and that reality is somewhat fixed, whereas qualitative inquiry assumes that variables are complex and dynamic, and that reality is relative to the participants being interviewed (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). Moreover, quantitative inquiries assume that one can objectively know things, and utilize instruments and researcher roles that are consistent with this assumption, whereas in qualitative inquiries, researchers act as participant-observers, and typically are the primary research instrument being utilized. Quantitative inquiry has a goal of generalizability of results which means using large, randomized samples, in controlled environments and using structured methods. On the other hand, qualitative inquiry has a goal of discovery, understanding and theory building, and therefore uses smaller samples in naturalistic environments, with malleable methods, that are used to capture the nuances of participants' experiences and meaning constructions related to a phenomenon. Often, quantitative research is used to test the veracity of grand theories, whereas qualitative studies are used to build or refine provisional theories (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

The four main uses of qualitative inquiry are instrumental, transformative, symbolic, and enlightenment (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). When qualitative inquiry is used for instrumental purposes, it is typically used in order to solve a specific problem. The knowledge derived from the study is applied to resolving the problem. In transformative use, qualitative data is used to empower specific populations and lead them to make changes and eventually alter larger structures like in politics. When used for symbolic purposes, qualitative inquiries can help create new, nuanced understandings and explanations for a phenomenon than those that have already been uncovered. When used for enlightenment, qualitative data enlightens the general public, or imparts new knowledge about a specific problem or situation, or population that is poorly understood (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

Of the four main uses of qualitative inquiry, the two that are most relevant to the present study are enlightenment and instrumental (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). It is hoped that the results of this study will inform the literature about attachment style, specifically the development of attachment style over the lifespan. Furthermore, it is expected that the results of this study will reveal what critical events can act as catalysts for or as protective factors against insecure attachment. It is hoped that the results of this study will inform treatments for maltreated or neglected children as well as couples in marital counseling.

Specific Methodology

Phenomenological method is a way of approaching research that explores the meaning ascribed to the experience of a phenomenon by those who have experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). The transcendental phenomenological approach is a postmodern version of the original phenomenological approach that pays special attention to epoche, or setting

aside one's own preconceptions or understandings of a phenomena in order to fully grasp the participants' true emic experiences without bias or corruption (Moustakas, 1994).

The transcendental phenomenological method is relevant to the present study because bias management is necessary to more accurately capture and portray participants' emic experiences (Glesne, 2016). Transcendental phenomenological method emphasizes epoche or the bracketing of biases in order to gain a truer understanding of the participant's experiences. In the case of this study, the focus was discovering how participants constructed their relational schema in response to critical attachment injuries with primary caregivers, yet have been able to experience secure attachment experiences in his or her current intimate relationships (Glesne, 2016).

This study focused on uncovering the emic meaning making of those who have experienced insecure attachment in their families of origin. It also explored how those who have experienced significant attachment injuries in childhood can find secure attachments in their current intimate relationships. Regardless of personal attachment experiences, I wanted to be careful to set aside my preconceptions so that I would be open to hearing the complexities and nuances of my participant's experiences, rather than inserting my own into their narratives. To do so ensured that I would not dilute my participants' emic experiences with attachment injury during childhood and the development of secure attachment in adult romantic relationships.

Role of the Researcher

Intersubjectivity is a phenomenon that is assumed in qualitative studies. The qualitative paradigm assumes that researchers' and participants' subjectivities both affect each other and possibly alter the outcomes of a study (Glesne, 2016). For example, when a

researcher formulates specific questions to ask in an interview, this may lead the participants to answer a certain way. Similarly, the wording of the question may cause the participant to think of a topic differently. In the same way, a participant's response to a question could lead a researcher to ask a question that was not originally part of the interview protocol.

The challenge of intersubjectivity is that the role of the qualitative researcher is to attempt to represent the experiences of the participants with emic fidelity. In order to achieve this, researchers must set aside their own biases and lessen their impact on the study's processes and results. Qualitative researchers must utilize a reliable strategy in which they can challenge their own beliefs and biases about the phenomenon being studied, question their role and interactions with participants, and attempt to remove their own subjectivities from as much of the methods and data as they possibly can (Delamont, 1992).

To do so, the qualitative researcher assumes that the role of a participant-observer, which is the role qualitative researchers strive to embody. It is a role that lies along a continuum between being a full participant in the phenomenon and being a pure observer of it. In this role, the researcher must be in touch with the phenomenon, but not engulfed by it (Glesne, 2016).

This role is utilized by qualitative researchers because while it is important to closely or experientially learn about and get in touch with a specific phenomenon in order to understand it, it is also important for the researcher to maintain some objectivity about the phenomenon in order to be more curious about it, especially aspects of the experience that are more difficult for participants to articulate. If a researcher plays the role of full observer, it may be easier to maintain the perspective of an uninvolved outsider, but he or she may miss out on experiencing and capturing the essence of the phenomenon, or misunderstand

parts of its inner workings. On the other hand, if the researcher plays the role of full participant, he or she may be able open up greater opportunities to learn, but can lose sight of what the study encompasses or lose his or her objectivity. As a full participant, the researcher becomes a part of the community that he or she is studying, and then can fall victim to biases (Glesne, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The four categories of ethical theory that inform qualitative inquiry are consequential theories, theories of rights and responsibilities, theories of social justice, and theories of care (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). In consequentialist theories, the focus is on outcomes, specifically the best outcomes for the most amount of people (utilitarian ethics) or ends that justify the means (teleological ethics). In nonconsequentialist theory, which encapsulates theories of rights and responsibilities and social justice (critical ethics), the focus is on the assumption that each individual human being has fundamental rights, and on propagating equality and fairness. Care theories focus on the responsibility of the researchers and participants to respect each other and to strive for mutual or reciprocal benefit.

The ethical responsibility of the researcher is to manage, if not eliminate, any potential harm that could come to the participants; to consider all the needs of and impact of the study on stakeholders in a phenomenon, and to provide participants with respect, reciprocity, fidelity, and choice (Glesne, 2016). The ethical responsibility of the researcher is also to ensure that there is a morally sound reason to conduct the study and that the results inform the phenomenon being studied, and benefit the participants involved (Glesne, 2016). This is important because at times, qualitative research can delve into sensitive topics, and it would not be ethical to potentially re-traumatize participants if the benefits from the study

will not outweigh this cost. Researchers are also responsible for immersing themselves in the population being studied so that they are accepted, identifying with whom they must speak with to find the information that they are seeking, monitoring their role with the participants and determining the right time to terminate the study.

Furthermore, researchers are responsible for providing a two-part comprehensive informed consent protocol to their participants that includes, but is not limited to, informing them of their rights as participants to choose to defer or not to answer questions during interviews, and/or withdraw from the study at any time without cause or concern regarding negative consequences from the researcher or the university with which the researcher is affiliated, the benefits and risks of the study, how much input they will have in the final product, confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality, anonymity, and how the results will be disseminated (Glesne, 2016). The first of the two-part informed consent is given at the outset of the study, and outlines the participants' rights and the researcher's responsibility. The second part of the informed consent is given at the very end. This type of protocol is used because although one may agree to be part of the study at the outset, the participants could share deeply personal information that they may decide is too intimate to be written up or published in research. Researchers are also responsible for establishing who is the owner of the products of the study. The participants are considered the owners of their own life stories, while the analysis and write up belong to both the participant and the researchers.

The consent protocol also discusses what data will be included in the final product, how participant identities will be protected, and whose voice and perspectives will be the most privileged in the data. Particularly, researchers are responsible for communicating the participants' interpretive authority over the data. They should disclose that participants have

the right to add, subtract, revise, and edit the data, because of the importance of capturing the emic experience of the participants (Glesne, 2016). Researchers are also responsible for establishing and communicating how the data will be secured, who has access to it and when. Specifically, the researcher will explain the double lock protocol, which assumes that all data and other products of this study are to be stored using two separate locks in order to keep information confidential (Glesne, 2016).

Purposive Sampling and Bounding of the Study

Purposive sampling is the process of choosing a specific set of participants who can help capture the complexity of a specific phenomenon, rather than assessing the distribution of those experiences. The process involves selecting participants that have the most direct knowledge about a phenomenon in order to obtain the richest data possible (Patton, 2002).

Purposive sampling is used in qualitative inquiry because researchers are conducting their studies to refine or generate grounded theories on poorly understood phenomenon or lesser known aspects of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). They want to gather information that will portray the range and complexity of experiences and meanings attributed to the phenomenon rather than develop models that will capture the average experience or understanding of the phenomenon. Because of this, qualitative researchers are not focused on those who do not have experience with the phenomenon being studied. Researchers want the interviews they conduct to be as meaningful and informational as possible. Qualitative researchers select potential participants that are experientially knowledgeable of the phenomenon being studied. Interviewing participants who have not experienced the topic being studied would be completely useless for the study, as they would not be able to provide knowledge about the emic experience with said phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

The sampling method that best fit my research questions was the deviant or atypical case selection. The deviant or atypical case selection method involved choosing rare or unusual manifestations of a phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). Attachment is commonly understood to be relatively stable over the lifetime, with those having secure attachments to their parents as children often having secure attachments to intimate partners later in life. However, this study's focus was on critical incidents that may contribute to attachment injuries as a child, as well as those that contribute to the ability to establish secure attachments later in life.

Data Collection and Analysis

Pre-Entry

Pre-entry is the phase of a qualitative study during which time the researcher prepares to enter the field. During this period, researchers must consider the need to identify gatekeepers or informants, which are individuals who can assist researchers with entry into the field. Further, researchers must also begin learning cultural protocols that may enhance theoretical sensitivity and entry into the field. Researchers must be competent enough with a culture that they are able to gain entry and maintain a relationship with the participants (Glesne, 2016).

In the present study, gatekeepers were identified using personal and professional contacts. I intended to recruit gatekeepers, informants, and participants alike from a state psychological association's listserve where professional request referrals and consultations via email. I also intended to inquire with my church's pastor and former supervisors if they were willing and/or able to provide me with names of individuals (with their consent) so that I may contact them and ask for their participation.

Entry

Entry is defined as the ongoing process of entering the field and making contact and building rapport with participants that begins before the researcher begins gathering data (Glesne, 2016). Some issues with entry are viewing relationships as emergent processes rather than static, deep versus surface culture, role management, recruitment of participants, and informed consent (Glesne, 2016).

A two-part informed consent protocol was used to protect the participants' right to ownership and authority over the products of the study. At the outset of a study, the participants did not yet know what exactly he or she would end up sharing or if he or she would be comfortable with that information being disseminated publicly. The first part of the informed consent gave consent to be part of the study, and involved informing the participant what the researcher was asking of him or her, what was expected of him or her as a participant. The initial consent also discussed who would be involved in the study; the purpose of the study; the reason for the study being conducted; the reason the participant was chosen; how many meetings would take place; how information would be collected, stored, used, and handled after the study is finished; and the rights of the participants' collaboration, voice, ownership, confidentiality, as well as the limits of confidentiality, anonymity, interpretive authority and privilege over the information. The final consent gave consent to use all of the data that was provided throughout the study after the participant had the opportunity to edit, alter, retract or add information as they see fit.

Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method originated in the grounded theory approach (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). It involves a process in which data collection and analysis

simultaneously inform each other. Since they are conducted systematically and concurrently, each cycle reveals an increasingly deeper understanding, enhancing the researcher's theoretical sensitivity and immersion. This method is used in qualitative research so that the researcher is able to address unexpected discoveries in the field, modify hypotheses and data-gathering strategies, and keep records of these alterations. It also allows the researcher to assess his or her own impact on the participants as well as on the phenomenon itself, and to alter behavior in order to minimize this impact. Finally, the constant comparative method allows the researcher to use his or her own judgment in order to inform emergent field methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Interviewing

Although there are several different methods of conducting interviews, the present study focused on and aimed for face-to-face interviews with its participants. Further, the interviews in the present study were semi-structured, using grand tour questions, which are colloquial derivatives of the research questions that aim to allow the participant to guide discussion with space given to lead the researcher wherever he or she finds important and appropriate. These semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were also audiotaped and later transcribed.

Data Management

The primary strategy used for data management in the present study was running code. This is an alternative to coding by document that includes a more rigorous process of identifying and clustering emerging themes (Glesne, 2016). In running code, the researcher played the audio recorded interview back and quickly jotted down phrases or themes that stood out or seemed representative of significant themes that developed throughout the

dialogue. Subsequently, the researcher clustered these codes in order to gain a better sense of what is being revealed by the participant and expose areas where the researcher may have failed to follow up or dig deeper into the participant's emic experience (Glesne, 2016).

Macro-level coding, like running code, is often used in situations where time is a limited resource and researchers are aiming to stay immersed in the field or be able to return to the field more quickly. The process of macro-level coding commenced immediately after the researcher concluded an interview, and began with the questions "what appears to be going on in this interview?" or "what makes this interview different from other interviews that have been conducted?" From there, the researcher created a list of emerging constructs or themes gleaned from the interview (Glesne, 2016).

Peer Debriefing

The purpose of a peer debriefer is to act as the researcher's support, devil's advocate, methodological consultant, and sounding board (Glesne, 2016). The researcher in the present study worked with a peer debriefer before, during, and after data collection, likely bi-weekly, in order to discuss observations, conceptualizations and methodological difficulties. The peer debriefer kept the researcher honest and helped the researcher to prevent biases from corrupting the data. Further, the peer debriefer provided backup for the researcher's internal reflexive process of questioning inferences, suggested alternative hypotheses, and assisted in brainstorming methodological refinements in the face of problems encountered in the field (Glesne, 2016).

Coding

In the transcendental phenomenological method, there are three levels of coding: phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis (Glesne, 2016). In

phenomenological reduction, also called open coding, the researcher deconstructed the data collected from the interviews into smaller meaning units. This was done by analyzing the interview transcript line-by-line (unit by unit), and labeling or naming what appears to be captured in that unit of data (Moustakas, 1994). In *imaginative variation*, also called axial coding, the researcher looked at the codes that have been gathered in the phenomenological reduction phase and clustered them into categories and subcategories.

The researcher analyzed each code and determined which ones were interconnected enough to become a category of its own, or if they needed to be separated. Moreover, the researcher analyzed the codes at the process level, in order to determine which codes fell into subcategories that belonged under specific categories (Moustakas, 1994). In *synthesis*, also called selective coding, the researcher differentiated between code clusters that were similar to each other, and which ones were those that revealed new themes and data that were emerging (Moustakas, 1994). In this process, the researcher learned that codes that were previously grouped together would also be more representative of the participant's experience if they were separated and clustered differently. Further, the researcher chose to look between the participants' codes in order to determine whether to integrate the coding lists across cases (Moustakas, 1994).

Peer Examination

The purpose of a peer examiner is to assist in enhancing the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher, examine inconsistencies between current and prior material with the intent of developing possible reinterpretations, elaborations, or refinements of explanations (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). The peer examiner helped the researcher to manage biases that were emerging within the data collected from the interviews. Because the researcher may

have had some preconceived notions as to what would emerge in the data, it was important to have a peer examiner to hold an objective stance and offer alternative explanations to what was emerging in the data.

Generating the Narrative

The narrative that is generated using the thematic codes from the interviews is what is shared with the participants in order to assure that their emic experiences are being captured accurately (Glesne, 2016). As data was collected from the interviews, a more comprehensive understanding of all of the themes that emerged developed. From there, the researcher constructed a narrative using the codes that captured the essence of the experiential meanings of the participants and exemplary quotes that illustrated the importance of these themes. The narrative was meant to focus on what are the most important and salient aspects of the participant's experiences of the phenomenon being studied (Glesne, 2016).

Member Check

Member checks were conducted using the narrative and were meant to ensure that the participant's story is being told accurately (Glesne, 2016). The researcher checked with participants to make sure that transcripts, and preliminary and final write-ups were fair and accurate portrayals of their experience with the phenomenon. The final member check process acknowledged the ownership, and interpretive privilege of the participant by allowing him or her to identify any information that they wish to edit, alter, add, or remove from the preliminary and final write-ups of the study (Glesne, 2016).

Methods of Verification

Validity

Validity in qualitative research is sometimes referred to as the trustworthiness of the study, or the study's ability to capture the participants' experience of a certain phenomenon accurately (Glesne, 2016). It is assessed using credibility and confirmability, or by checking how well the study's findings align with the experience of the participants and by assuring the researchers' objectivity while obtaining information from the participants (Glesne, 2016).

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of this study, I used the following methods of verification: review of biases, entry, relational ethics, role management, peer debriefing, peer examination, and member checking. I enhanced validity in this study by constantly checking my own experience and perceptions throughout the study. I also have an insecure attachment style, and thought that it would be beneficial to the study to consistently check whether or not my own biases were causing me to project my own perceptions onto the participants' responses. I also needed to establish and maintain rapport, relational ethics, and my specific role, since I was inquiring into potentially deep and long-standing pain that the participants may have experienced. In doing this, I ensured that the responses that I received from participants were genuine and true, because I ensured that my participants trusted me. I also used peer debriefing and peer examinations since I am a stakeholder in this phenomenon and needed to constantly check my biases throughout the study. This enhanced validity by ensuring that I was accurately capturing the experience of the participants rather than my own experience. I also did member checks, since my participants were the experts on their own experiences and were the best people to check with to make sure that my biases were not being represented in the data.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research is associated with transferability or analytical generalizability of the study's thematic findings, the ability of the study's thematic findings to inform similar phenomena to the one being studied (Glesne, 2016). It is assessed on the basis of theoretical saturation, which is collecting data until there are no new themes that emerge, and is enhanced using methods of verification like purposive sampling, triangulation of data by source, type, theory and site, and the constant comparative method, and immersion. Reliability is also assessed on dependability, or the ability of the results of the study to be replicated or compared to other similar studies.

In order to enhance transferability of the findings of my study, I used the following methods of verification: purposive sampling, entry, relational ethics, role management, a review of biases, peer debriefing, peer examination, and member checking. Purposive sampling enhanced the transferability of my study because the more specific I was with my participants, the more accurate my findings would be in describing a phenomenon. I enhanced the reliability of this study by building and establishing rapport, relational ethics, and my role in the study. These efforts enhanced reliability by ensuring that the participants trusted me enough to provide rich and honest information. I also needed to constantly review my biases to ensure that my own perceptions of the participants' experiences were not tainting the data, and that I was truly trying to understand deeply each participant's experience. I also used peer debriefing and peer examination to ensure that the information and interpretations were genuinely that of the participants, and not mine, creating a genuine understanding of the phenomenon. Member checking was also important in ensuring that I was accurately capturing the participants' experiences.

Utility

In qualitative research, utility is a third criteria for assessing the rigor of a study. Utility assesses how useful the findings of a study are and how easily used they are. It also includes whether or not the results add to the literature and knowledge base about a phenomenon and if the results are applicable in the field (Glesne, 2016).

Utility is assessed using five criteria: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). The first is *fairness*, which involves the consideration by the researchers to include or reflect the perspectives of all the participants of the study and other stakeholders in the phenomenon who were not the focus of the inquiry. The second is *ontological authenticity*, which refers to the study's ability to reveal a new understanding of a phenomenon that may have been studied before, but not comprehended the phenomenon in the same way as it was by participants in the current study. The third is *educative authenticity*, which refers to the study's ability to deepen and widen the understanding of a phenomenon, to further clarify or refine existing theory. The fourth is *catalytic authenticity*, which refers to the ease with which a study's findings can be applied to the process of developing interventions, or to act as a catalyst for changes. The fifth is *tactical authenticity*, which is the study's ability to help all stakeholders in a certain phenomenon, not only the participants who were specifically involved in the study.

The criteria that I was looking to meet in my study if it was continued to saturation were ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity. I had a strong desire for my study to reveal new, deeper information about attachment, and to be able to inform new interventions in the future. This is because attachment style can be pervasive in

romantic relationships, and a new, viable treatment for people with insecure attachment could aid in alleviating many couples' troubles.

CHAPTER III. EMERGENT FIELD METHOD

Pre-Entry

Review of Biases

A review of biases was conducted during the pre-entry phase, and includes researchers' professional, methodological, and personal biases, along with how these biases could negatively impact the rigor of the study, and the plan the researchers intend to implement to minimize these negative impacts (Glesne, 2016).

Theoretical Biases

For psychology students, theoretical or professional biases often are linked to their theoretical orientations. One example of a professional bias for a psychologist-in-training is when his or her therapeutic role interferes with the researcher's ability to maintain his or her role as a learner. If the researcher's therapeutic role is very similar to that of a participant-observer, the researcher will have to closely monitor his or her tendency to feel a pull to be a change agent especially when the participant talks about painful or unresolved issues relative to the phenomenon. If the researcher's therapeutic role is very different from the participant-observer role, this role difference can also present methodological problems. These biases may lead the researcher to be more attuned to aspects of participants' experiences that align with his or her theoretical perspective, and less attuned to the aspects that do not (Glesne, 2016).

I have always tended toward a psychodynamic theoretical orientation. Because of this, I am very focused on issues in an individual's family of origin, patterns in relationship dynamics, and unconscious thoughts, wishes, and fantasies (Freud, 1977). Attachment style is very much rooted in psychodynamic theory, and so it will be difficult for me when a

participant strays from this model or explains an experience in terms that do not align with psychodynamic theory. My concern prior to entering the field was that I might focus more on experiences that had to do with attachment injuries, for example, and focus less on stories that are about successful relationships that did not match up with insecure attachment styles. My concern was that this would affect my study because I would be selectively focusing on my own theoretical agendas. My data would not necessarily uncover the breadth and depth of experiences contributing to my participants' journeys from insecure attachment to secure attachment.

I addressed this by being mindful of my own biases, by trying to be particularly attentive to stories that did not follow the same rules as my theoretical perspectives. I also tried to monitor biases in my follow-up questions; for example, not asking more questions when a story aligned with my theoretical perspectives than when it did not. Between interviews, I checked in with my peer debriefer to keep me accountable and kept up with my field journal, exploring the biases with which I was struggling.

Psychodynamic theory also focuses a lot on the unconscious and wishes that individuals may have about their lives (Freud, 1977). Because many believe that problems are solved when the unconscious thoughts are brought into awareness and become more aligned with conscious thoughts, or wishes are fulfilled, I was concerned that I might be inclined to inquire about situations where my participants had experiences like these. Conversely, I was concerned that I might end up devaluing or disregarding stories or theories my participants might have about how their problems emerged and were resolved. By engaging in these questions, I would be taking away from my participants' experiences based

on my own theoretical beliefs and I would likely miss out on the richness of their experiences.

I initially intended to address this bias by being sure not to pry or ask leading questions that lined up with my theoretical agendas and by allowing my participants to lead me in their stories and go where they felt was important. Between interviews, I checked in with my peer debriefer to discuss whether they thought I was being too directive or focusing on areas that did not need as much attention.

Luckily, I had participants who were open and willing to provide vivid details regarding their experiences, frequently leaving me at a loss for follow-up questions. This mitigated some of the risk of asking leading questions or forcing my participants away from their own experiences with my questions. However, there were still instances in which I unintentionally inserted my own biases into my follow-up questions. More specifically, I made analyses and interpretations of my participants' experiences, and frequently asked follow-up questions that were more so just confirmations of my own interpretation of their stories and the emotions tied to them. There was an unknown amount of data loss because of this insertion of my own theoretical biases into the data.

Also relating to theoretical biases that may have disrupted the participants or taken away from the data, I am still a budding clinician, who was taught the major psychological theories in my studies. In consulting with my committee members and peer debriefer, it was brought to my attention that there were moments where I incorporated several different theories into my follow-up questions as well as my interpretation of my participants' experiences. The exploration of my theory seems to have led to the application of different styles within my interviewing. It was also apparent in the drafts of the narratives that I was

drawing from multiple theories. My interpretations were reflective of different styles of interpretations that needed to be separated. It seems that, in the process of me becoming more grounded in my theoretical orientation, I was more susceptible to the biases that came with them.

All in all, there were some biases that I was unable to avoid because they were much more pervasive than I had initially thought. As a new clinician, I was more susceptible to pulling from multiple theories simultaneously. There were theoretical mishaps that occurred throughout my interviewing, my coding, as well as the construction of the narratives.

Methodological Biases

Methodological biases are those that have to do with how researchers have been trained to conduct research (Glesne, 2016). Specifically, the majority of students are trained in quantitative or positivist methods that differ greatly from qualitative methods. One type of methodological bias is methodological drift. These are biases in which the researcher may stray away from qualitative methodology and assume that participants will provide data that fits into a positivistic frame or may make inquiries that explore correlations that they hypothesized. These may include assuming a more expert role, asking leading questions in order to test hypotheses that they have made, or search for more common patterns in the data rather than capturing the complexities of each individual's experience (Glesne, 2016).

The second type of methodological bias has to do with role management (Glesne, 2016). Researchers may take on the role of therapist, and enter interviews with a goal to rescue or treat the participant, rather than staying objective and curious about participants' experiences. Conversely, the researcher may enter the interview with his or her own preconceived notions of what the participants' experiences must be like based on previous

research, and ask leading questions as a result, rather than collaborating with the participant in uncovering his or her emic experiences (Glesne, 2016).

I addressed this type of bias by making sure to keep the qualitative paradigm in mind during my interviews. I attempted this by sticking to open-ended and non-directive questions, and allowing the participant to lead me, rather than letting myself take the lead. Between interviews, I consulted with my peer debriefer about my interview questions. However, when it came to the follow-up questions that came up spontaneously throughout the interview as each participant provided their experiences, it was impossible to confer and ensure that the questions were not directive in an attempt to test hypotheses that I had formulated. In fact, I felt that there were several instances in which I asked leading, dichotomous questions that, in hindsight, I recognize were asked for that very reason. I also found that I had frequently paraphrased or reflected the participants' experiences, and added in my own speculations regarding their emotional responses in those moments. I noticed this when reviewing the transcripts of the interviews, and I saw that there were several instances in which I talked for long periods, followed by the participants responding with "yes," or some other affirmative answer. This meant that rather than allowing my participant to speak their own perceptions in their own words, I paraphrased and speculated it, and only allowed them to agree or disagree with my interpretation of their experience. This interfered with the data because I did not allow my participants to come to their own conclusions in their own words. Rather, they were forced to simply agree or disagree with a heavily biased interpretation that came from me.

I struggled with methodological biases for some of the same reasons that I fell victim to methodological bias. As mentioned above, I am a budding clinician. Because of this, at

times I tended toward specific rather than open-ended questions in order to prove a hypothesis that I had, rather than trying to understand my participants' experiences holistically. By doing this, I led the participant to talk about aspects of their experiences that were not important to them. There were several instances in which it was clear that I had derailed my participants. After a line-by-line analysis of the transcripts, I realized that there were instances in which my participants were telling a story, and I would interrupt or ask an unnecessary clarifying question or attempt an empathetic comment, only for my participant to completely follow where I had inadvertently led them, rather than waiting for them to continue with the original train of thought. Because of this, valuable data was likely lost, as my participants were unable to complete their thought or story.

I struggled with methodological drift throughout the study. When generating the narrative, I found that I struggled with writing a descriptive presentation of the findings. Instead, I adorned my therapist hat and wrote narratives that were akin to case conceptualizations. This was problematic because I was inserting my own biases and interpretations into the data, rather than allowing my participants' stories to speak for themselves. It took my peer debriefer pointing this out in order for me to recognize it. In my attempts to delve deeper into the data, I added my own analysis, rather than simply describing what the participants had disclosed to me.

I addressed this issue by taking into account my peer debriefer's line-by-line analysis of my narratives. I paid close attention to where I had added in my own interpretation of my participants' experiences, and noted that it was more likely to emerge when I attempted to provide an in-depth explanation of each quote that I was using, rather than allowing the quotes to speak for themselves. It seems that if such interpretations were necessary, then the

narrative was not constructed in a way that would accurately portray my participants' stories. I realized that I needed to restructure the narratives in a way that I could make as few inferences as possible, so that there was little to no interpretation from me, and much more of my participants' words.

In order to manage this, I also had to take a closer look at each participants' transcripts in order to ensure that the meanings that I had put into the narratives came directly from the participants, not from my own understanding of each of them. It took some line-by-line reading of transcripts with my research chair in order for me to try to take the role of my participant. Reading through the transcripts, with me reading my participants' lines, helped me to take a more participant role and be more cognizant of what the participant was trying to express, rather than what I had inserted with my own interpretations

Personal Biases

Personal biases are those that are based on our experiences and socialization (Glesne, 2016). Rather than focusing on the participants' experiences and constructions of meaning, personal assumptions based on one's own history can interfere with hearing aspects of the participants' stories that are incongruent with the researcher's history and meaning making.

One personal bias that I had going into this study was my hope that I would be able to change my attachment style from an insecure one to a secure one. Because this bias exists, I was concerned that I might be inclined to ignore potential evidence that contradicted this hope and pay more attention to details that aligned with it. I could also engage in either-or thinking rather than being open to the possibility that the participants' stories might reflect hope and despair, and not be fully resolved yet. It was also possible that I might pay less attention to details of my participants' experiences that were not as severe as mine, so that I

could think of my participant as similar to me in order to keep my hope alive. This would be the most dangerous bias because, if left unchecked, it could lead me to completely misconstrue my participants' stories and leave me with participants who, on paper, lived similarly to my life, when their actual story could be completely different.

I attempted to address this by being mindful about the questions I was asking, and reminding myself that this study was intended capture the true essence of my participants' experiences—not my own. Between interviews, I checked in with my peer debriefer who understood my past, and was willing to point out when she sees that my biases are coming out in my questioning.

Another personal bias that I monitored was my belief that my experiences were worse than anyone else's experiences. Because of this, I was concerned that I might tend to mentally devalue participants' experiences, which could cause me to paint a completely incorrect picture of them in the data collection and analysis.

I addressed this during the study by reminding myself during interviews that there is always someone who has it worse, and that just because someone's experience is different, does not make their story less important than mine. Between interviews, I checked in with my peer debriefer to keep myself accountable and nonjudgmental with my participants' stories.

Everything considered, my strategy still had flaws, and some of my biases did come through in the data. Although I was mindful about my grand tour questions, my follow up questions, and my interpretations throughout the present study, when it came to generating the narrative, it was apparent that my biases influenced my first drafts of the narrative write-ups throughout. It appears that my biases were much more insidious than first thought, as it

appeared to be almost completely unconscious biases that were scattered throughout my participants' narratives. It took reading through the transcripts with my research chair, and some deep introspection to truly see where I had inserted my own biases, my own emotions, and my own experiences into my participants. Although not surprising, given my past and my stake in the present study, it was jarring to recognize, and challenging to work through in order to de-bias my narratives.

In spite of this, there were parts of my strategies to avoid bias that did work. For example, although I accidentally derailed my participants throughout the interviews, there was no instance in which I intentionally devalued or purposefully chose to ignore or discredit their stories. I valued every word that my participants spoke to me, and I viewed every story as important to their overall story. I operated under the assumption that if my participants were mentioning it, then it must hold some importance to them. This benefitted my participants, as well as the data. Furthermore, there were no instances in which I devalued or minimized my participants' stories with the assumption that I had experienced worse. This may be because it is my opinion that my participants have experienced a great deal of trauma, or because I had an inherent appreciation for their experiences. Either way, I was able to conduct interviews without comparing my participants' experiences with my own with a ranking system in mind.

Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers are persons identified to have a relationship with potential research participants who have experience with the phenomenon being studied. They are a sort of informant who are able to assist in gaining access to prospective participants. For the present

study, the primary gatekeepers considered included the leadership of a state psychological association, a church pastor, and another member of the professional community.

Upon consulting with my CRP committee, it was determined that using my church's pastor as a gatekeeper would be inappropriate, as I have close, almost familial relationships with most of the members of my church's congregation. These close relationships with individuals who are very much authority figures in my perspective, would make it difficult to remain objective throughout data collection. Further, I speculated that it would be difficult for me to delve deeper into the participants' experiences when I view them as authority figures, people whom I admire and idealize. It may have been difficult for me to digest the difficulties that they have survived.

As for utilizing the state psychological association leadership as gatekeepers via that association's listserv; an administrator of the association was contacted, and written permission to utilize their listserv was granted. I was told to submit my IRB application and approval letter, as well as a brief cover letter to be posted to the listserv with a summary of the present study, what would be asked of those who choose to participate, and my contact information. After a few edits to the cover letter, and a request for the initial consent form for the present study, this individual stated that they would release the documents on the listserv. However, my professional contacts yielded participants before the announcement was posted to the listserv, so there was no longer a need to pursue that option.

Role Management

Prior to entering the field, I was apprehensive about my ability to maintain a research perspective throughout the interviews. Because I have been trained in therapy, I was afraid that I would fall into a therapeutic role, rather than a researcher role. I was afraid that I would

try to “save” my participants, rather than listen to their experiences as a researcher. Because I am an empathic person, I was nervous that I would not be able to sit with my participants’ trials, tribulations, and intense emotions without attempting to come to their aid. Doing so would derail my participants’ process and disclosures, and keep them from delving deep into their emic experiences. My plan to address this was to constantly remind myself to remain curious, and also remind myself that my role was not to “save” the participant, but just to learn about them.

Another fear that I had was one that I would fall into a “friend” role with my participants. Although it could have been beneficial in terms of becoming immersed in the participants’ experiences, I did not want to become overly involved, for fear of losing objectivity. My primary method of relating to and building rapport with others is the local cultural practice of “talking story.” This is where individuals engage in conversation, casual or otherwise, that can cover a wide range of topics. I, as a researcher, was afraid that this “talking story” might lead me to disclosure of my own similar experiences, which would take away from the participant’s experiences. When engaging in “talking story,” people often disclose reciprocal experiences with one another, as a way of associating and possibly bonding. I knew I had to ensure that the focus was on the participant’s experiences only, with no regard to my own. If I were to fall into the “friend” role, and treat our interviews as “talk story” sessions, I might take away from my participant’s experiences, and possibly put them off from sharing their stories. What I needed to strive to do was to create a context that would be safe and inclusive while managing my pull to share my own story.

I planned to address this by being mindful of the type of relationship that I wanted to have with my participant. Being a budding professional, I compensate by trying to always put

my best, most professional foot forward. I intended to utilize this strategy in order to keep myself from falling into a more casual or friendly role with my participants. Further, I intended to keep in mind that my experiences, whether similar or different from those of my participants, did not matter, as I was there solely to try to gain an understanding of my participants' experiences.

Entry

Gatekeepers

For this study, as mentioned above, I had initially planned to use my church, professional contacts, and a state psychological association's listserv to serve as gatekeepers in the study. My church proved to be too personal as a source of participants, so was not used. I decided that because of the personal and spiritual relationship that exists with members of my church, it would be difficult to remain objective and collect data from these individuals without bias. Further, my relationship with other church members would complicate my relationship with them. For much of my life, the members of the church have been authority figures rather than equals, and so it would have been difficult to reconfigure that relationship into one of academic professional and participant.

I also had intended to utilize the state psychological association's listserv to recruit gatekeepers, informants, and participants. Emails were exchanged and permission was granted from an administrator of the association. A letter to be posted onto the listserv was drafted and approved, but my professional contacts provided me with participants before the letter was posted to the listserv. Thus, it was unnecessary to continue to pursue the state psychological association route any further.

The researcher ultimately used referrals from professional contacts in order to recruit participants. Professional contacts were approached, informed about the nature and exclusion criteria of the study, and asked if they were aware of anyone they thought would be appropriate. The professional contacts were informed that they should approach potential participants and provide them with information about the study, then provide them with my contact information. Once contact was established between the potential participants and me, I provided additional information about the premises of the present study (e.g., the purpose of the study, what was being researched, what would be asked of participant, participant rights, researcher responsibilities, and risks and benefits of participation), and asked for confirmation of the participant's willingness to participate. After the participant agreed to participate, I emailed a copy of the initial informed consent form to them, and scheduled a time with participant to review and sign the initial informed consent form. It was made clear to the gatekeepers that although they could refer potential participants to me, that they would not receive confirmation or denial regarding the individual's decision to participate or not. The participants were and are, of course, free to discuss his or her participation in the study with whom he or she chooses, but I did not and will not disclose to anyone, including the gatekeepers, who participated in the present study.

My first participant and I were both sent an email from a gatekeeper, putting us in contact to schedule interviews. In order to contact this participant, I emailed her, privately and separately. The second participant was an individual with whom I had been in contact briefly just prior to beginning the present study. Both fit the criteria for the study. This process went very smoothly, possibly because I had participants who had already accomplished a great deal of progress in therapy, and were ready and willing to talk about

their experiences and help contribute to the literature. Further, I structured the initial contact to occur via email so that potential participants might feel safer if they decided not to participate after receiving more information regarding the present study.

Role Management

As I began to enter the field, I found that it was easier than expected not to fall into a therapeutic role in the interviews. Although there were moments when I felt the need to comfort and protect my participants, I was able to remind myself that it was okay for them to feel the things that they did, and that it was important that they do exactly that. I also made it clear to my participants that if at any point they needed a break, that they could ask for one and be granted one. My participants were also explicitly informed that they did not have to answer any question that they did not feel comfortable answering. Another factor that facilitated this ease of role management was the fact that my participants had both been through their own personal therapy and self-reflection that allowed them to speak about their childhood trauma in a way that gave them access to their intense emotions in a safe and regulated way.

Although my participants did disclose sadness and resentment in their interviews, they did not get overwhelmed by their experiences, possibly because they had already done the work of processing their trauma in a safe, therapeutic environment, and as a result had come to terms with their childhood experiences. This processing and acceptance of their trauma gave them the ability to recount painful experiences without becoming completely engulfed in the emotions that they felt while they were in those moments. I was lucky to have participants who were insightful and introspective, and far along in their journey to healing. I did not feel the urge to save my participants, because they had made it clear throughout their

interviews that although they had experienced abuse and neglect in the past, they had learned to protect or save themselves.

In terms of falling into a more casual “friend” role, I also found it easy to withhold my own experiences from the conversation. It may have been my focus on the participants’ stories, or my genuine curiosity that allowed me to just listen, rather than speak. Going into the interviews, I reminded myself that the purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the participants and their experiences. I told myself that I should only be speaking when I am asking my questions, follow-up questions, clarifying, or providing verbal feedback that I was following along with the participants’ narratives. While in the interviews, I did not feel the urge to provide my own related experiences, because I felt immersed in the participants’ experiences. There were few moments when I felt I needed to provide input, because I was too interested in what the participants had to say. The exceptions were moments when I provided a verbal appreciation for their trauma and the strength that they showed in handling and overcoming it. It was a struggle for me not to remind them how strong and impressive they were, and I often found myself stuttering and flailing, attempting to find the right words to explain the admiration and sympathy I felt for them and their experiences. In this way, I fell into the “friend” role of providing validation, even though I attempted to keep a more objective stance.

Informed Consent Protocol

A two-part informed consent protocol was used to protect the participants’ ability to make a fully informed consent about their participation and authority over the products of the study. At the outset of a study, the participants did not yet know what information he or she

might share during the interviews, nor did they know what information they would ultimately feel comfortable releasing and disseminating as part of my final study write-up.

The first part of the informed consent granted consent to participate in the study and involved informing the participants what participation involved; the purpose of the study; the purpose of the study; the reason the participant was chosen; how information would be collected, stored, used, and handled after the study is finished; the rights of the participants; ownership; confidentiality as well as the limits of confidentiality; anonymity; and interpretive authority over the information shared in the study. The final consent gave participants a chance to review my write-up and to provide fully informed consent for me to use all of the data that was provided throughout the study now that the participants had the opportunity to edit, alter, retract or add information for accuracy.

In the present study, the participants were given the informed consent via electronic mail prior to the first meeting, so that the participants could look over the consents on their own first. This gave the participants time to fully read through the entirety of the consent forms, learn their rights as participants, as well as what would be asked of them. This allowed them to form questions they could ask of me, if there was any uncertainty or confusion about any part of the consents. Upon the first meeting, the researcher then went over the initial consent form with each participant in detail, stopping and asking if the participant had any questions periodically. If the participant did have questions, the researcher clarified and provided more detail until the participant had a full and comfortable understanding.

As for the final consent, participants were sent an electronic copy at the same time they received the initial consent form. This was to allow the participants the ability to look

over the final consent, and what would be asked of them upon completion of the data analysis and member check. As stated, participants did not know what they would share at the outset of the study, and thus they would not know whether they would feel comfortable with said information being shared in such a public manner. The final consent gave the participants the right to withhold, change, or add any and all information that they saw fit.

In the present study, after data analysis was completed, each participant was provided with a copy of their narrative. They were allowed to read it over and provide edits for their respective narratives based on what they felt was an authentic representation of their experiences. Each participant was allowed to add, subtract, and alter any part of their narrative without any protest from the researcher. Participants were, however, asked to elaborate on the changes, so that I could come to understand their experiences better, and so that I could understand where my misconceptions came from. After the participants felt that their experiences were accurately represented, they were asked to sign the final consent form, and no more changes were made to the narratives.

Constant Comparative Method

Semi-Structured Interviews

Although there are several different methods of conducting interviews, the present study utilized semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with both participants. I used grand tour questions, which were colloquial derivatives of the research questions, to guide discussion while allowing each participant to begin directing the conversation in directions that they believed relevant to understanding the phenomenon of interest. I audio recorded and later transcribed each interview.

When scheduling the interviews with the participants, both participants requested that they meet at their homes. The researcher explained the confidentiality issues that could arise from meeting at the participants' homes such as housemates or family members being home or arriving home during interviews. However, both participants stated that there were times that they could be home alone and that interviews could be scheduled during those times. Both participants made it clear that meeting in their homes would be the most practical and comfortable situation for each of them. Although I was concerned about confidentiality issues, they assured me that they would only schedule during times when they were home alone, and that they felt their homes were the most private place for them. I was inclined to follow my participants' lead, and provide them with the most comfortable experience that I possibly could, given the content of the interviews.

Moreover, the present study intended to use two, approximately one-and-one-half-hour long interviews, scheduled between one and two weeks apart. One participant, because of time-constraints and limited availability, requested to conduct both interviews on the same day. I explained to this participant the risks, as covering that much sensitive material could be mentally exhausting. She, however, insisted because of her limited availability. Again, I was inclined to follow my participant's lead and accommodate her, so as to not disrupt her daily life or take up more time than she was able to provide. On the day of the interviews, I intended to allow the participant to take breaks as needed, but also to take a longer break between the two separate interviews. This produced two separate audio recordings that day.

I understand and have to acknowledge the methodological limitations that this decision introduced to the study. Allowing myself one to two weeks between interviews gave me the time to begin analyzing data, hypothesizing, and formulating follow up questions.

During this one to two-week period, I planned to listen to the recording of the first interview and begin macroanalysis, pulling themes that I believed were emerging from the interview. From there, I could formulate hypotheses about these themes that I could use to create follow up questions to gain more depth and clarity from the participant in the next interview. Because this participant asked to conduct both interviews on the same day, I was not allowed this time. Thus, there were some limitations with immersion. I was unable to begin the macroanalysis after the first interview, and therefore unable to recognize themes or formulate hypotheses outside of those that I could pull from our dialogue. If I had been able to have time to listen to the recording of the first interview before conducting the second interview, I may have been able to pull more themes and thus more follow up questions to ask during the second interview. It is possible that this change led to the loss of some data that may have emerged if I had this time.

Upon finishing the interviews, I realized that the first audio recording had been cut short about one-third of the way through. This meant that two-thirds of the data from the first interview had been lost. I was unsure how this happened, but it seems to be a technical issue that could not have been helped, as neither the researcher nor the participant had tampered with the audio-recording device before, during, or after the interviews. Because of this technical issue, the researcher asked whether the participant would be willing to repeat the interview, only including the questions that the audio recording had cut off. The participant agreed, and the two-thirds of lost interview was conducted in a private office at the participant's place of work. Much of the data that the participant provided during these interviews was similar, however, the authentic wording and emotion that may have been contained in the original, lost recording may not have been reproduced.

The other participant produced interviews that were slightly longer than one-and-one-half hours. Specifically, one interview was one hour and thirty-six minutes, and the other was one hour and forty-four minutes. These times included receiving verbal consent to begin and end the interviews, as well as short breaks to check in and consume refreshments. These interviews were extended by a few minutes past one-and-one-half hours because I felt that cutting the participant's stories short at the one-and-one-half hour mark would have interrupted the process and compromised the working alliance that had been forged between researcher and participant. If I had ended the recordings at exactly one-and-one-half hours, I feel that I would have taken away from my participant's experience, reducing the benefits to them, such as having a chance to candidly explain their experience, as well as having their story be told in the present study. Further, in this study I made it a point to keep the audio recording device near them, so that they were able to pause or stop the recording at any point if they felt they wanted or needed to. It is my understanding that they were able to see the amount of time that had elapsed during each interview. In retrospect, I should have made more of a point to ensure that the participant was aware at the one-and-one-half hour point, and obtain their explicit permission to continue a little beyond this time in order for them to finish their story. However, it seemed that this verbal interruption may have been intrusive, and may have made the participant feel rushed. That being said, the structure of the present study was constructed with the safety of the participants in mind, and breaching this on the basis of my own discretion rather than at the request of my participants would be inappropriate.

Considering the methodological changes that were made while in the field, I did not consult the IRB because I felt that these changes did not constitute a major modification of

the proposed methodology and were in the best interest of the participants. Moreover, I felt that the consequences of not making these changes would be more detrimental than making the changes. For example, not allowing my participants to choose the location of their interview may have made them feel unsafe, vulnerable, and as though they did not have any control or say in the terms of their participation in the study. Cutting participants off in the middle of their dialogue would make them feel as though I did not value their experiences, and could harm them. Disallowing my participant to honor her own time and schedule and forcing her to meet with me on two separate occasions would make her feel as though I did not value her time or her input. Of course, I understand and explained to this participant that conducting both interviews in one day likely could be strenuous, especially considering the content of the interviews, but she assured me that, given the processing of trauma that she has already done in her own personal mental health treatment, she could handle it. I did not feel inclined to invalidate her understanding of her emotional capacity. All of these changes were made because of decisions that were made by the participants, with their full consent and understanding of the risks, and for their benefit.

In terms of re-recording a lost portion of an interview, this was done only with the participant's full permission and willingness, ensuring that I was not causing undue scheduling conflicts or stress. Further, it was done in order to fully capture the participant's story. Missing one-third of one interview would severely damage the data that had been collected at that point, and a large chunk of that participant's story would be missing. This would do a disservice to not only the study, but more importantly, to that participant, since it would be her story that was disrupted, and erroneously represented.

Data Security

In the present study, pseudonyms were used in order to protect the identity of the participants. The participants were able to choose the non-identifying pseudonyms that were used in the data, and I was the sole proprietor of the documents linking the participants to their pseudonyms. One of my participants verbally expressed indifference about anonymity, stating that she did not care if others were to find out that she had participated in this study, and I had to choose a pseudonym for this participant. The pseudonym was generated in the physical presence of, and explicitly approved by the participant. This participant was not concerned about her identity being linked to the present study, or her data. An explanation was provided regarding the responsibility of the researcher to protect her anonymity and ensure that no identifying information was used in the study. I explained that, especially because of the sensitivity of the information that would likely be disclosed in the study, it is important that her identity remain anonymous because of potential negative effects that could occur were her data be linked to her personally. She expressed an understanding of this.

Before beginning each interview, I asked the participants' permission to begin the audio recording, and after receiving permission, I started the audio recording and got verbal confirmation that they understood that I had started the recording. I kept the audio recording device close to the participant, so that they had easy access to it should they feel that they did not want a part of the interview on record, or if they felt as though they wanted to end the interview for whatever reason. I felt that this gave the participants a sense of control over the interviews, which allowed them to feel a little safer throughout the experience. Although neither participant chose to pause or stop the recordings in any of the interviews, I believe

that giving them that authority over their experiences helped to build a rapport with each of them.

Audio recordings were saved on a password-protected device that only the researcher knew the password to, and each recording was saved under the respective participant's pseudonym. The audio recording device was kept on my person at all times and no other person had access to it. After the conclusion of the study, and after June 22, 2023, I will do with the recordings what each participant has requested of me on their initial consent form (return or destroy them; Appendix A). I found that keeping the pseudonym-labeled audio recordings on a password-protected device and on my person at all times ensured that the participants' information and interview recordings were secure at all times. This was because with the device on my person at all times and only I had access to it. Further, I could protect it if others were to try to access it, although this did not become necessary.

The computer used to type up transcripts and narratives was password-protected and, when not in use, was kept in a filing cabinet in my secured home. Only I have the password to this computer. When it was time for my peer debriefer/peer examiner to review transcripts, codes, and narratives, they were sent via electronic mail as was any feedback. When meetings were done in person, hard copies were given from the peer examiner/peer debriefer to the principle researcher and were placed in a filing cabinet in my secured home. All documents including transcripts, narratives, codes, field notes, and consents, were stored in a secured filing cabinet in my secured home. This worked well, as the filing cabinet that data were stored in were secured with two locks, one in the filing cabinet, and one for my home.

Data Management

The primary strategy used for data management in the present study was running code. I played the audio recorded interviews back and jotted down phrases or themes that stood out or seemed to represent the significant themes emerging during that interview. I then clustered these themes in order to gain a better sense of what was being revealed by the participant.

Macroanalysis was a huge help while I was analyzing the data for this study. Because microanalysis is such a time-consuming task, macroanalysis allowed me to listen to the recordings quickly and take notes as I listened. Moreover, macroanalysis helped me to get a general idea of the themes that had been emerging, before having to microanalyze and cluster the themes. It felt similar to cleaning my home, separating general piles initially, before I take on the task of sorting through and organizing each section. Macroanalysis allowed me to pick out “bigger,” more obvious themes, before going through with a fine-tooth comb and figuring out how each theme related to one another.

Transcription and Auditing

I initially intended to transcribe the interviews on my own, without using a transcriber or transcription service. I began doing this, by using headphones to play the audiorecordings, and typing as I listened. I always ensured that I worked in a private space in which no one could overhear any of the audio recordings.

After beginning the data analysis process, doing transcriptions manually was not feasible because it was far too time-consuming, so I used rev.com, a reputable and confidential transcription service offered online. I used this service for all of one participant’s audio recordings, and for one half of the other participant’s interviews. This, however, was

not done without first receiving explicit permission from each participant. Although it was discussed in the initial consent form that I may use a transcription service to transcribe, and each participant provided consent, it was important that I check with them again before using a transcription service. I did not use my participants' names when submitting the audio recordings for transcription, I only used their pseudonyms. My participants allowing me to utilize a transcription service helped me to stay on schedule with data analysis.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing was used primarily to better organize the data, and sort through biases and other methodological issues I was struggling with. When coding began, I initially began with etic, topical codes that were more clinical in nature, rather than representing the participants' experiences. The peer debriefer provided guidance regarding how to better generate thematic rather than topical codes that would provide a more emic portrayal of the participants' experiences. Further, the researcher's initial codes were not clustered in a manner that suggested a core code from which the rest of the codes originate. Each code was treated as independent from the rest. Through peer debriefing, the researcher was able to cluster the codes so that they all converge on a single, overarching code that was most representative of the participants' experiences.

The peer debriefer also was able to recognize methodological issues I was experiencing, such as leading the participants during interviews. I was asking many closed-ended questions, yes-or-no questions, and leading the participants toward my assumptions about the phenomenon rather than the participants' own understandings of their own experiences. This was leading me to miss out on valuable data and quotes that could have enhanced the study.

The present study utilized peer debriefing irregularly, though, primarily to better organize the data and sort through biases and other methodological issues that the researcher was struggling with. When coding began, the researcher initially began with etic, topical codes that were more clinical in nature, rather than representing the participant's experience. The peer debriefer along with the peer examiner provided guidance regarding how to better structure the codes that would provide a deeper understanding than what was being portrayed by the researcher's initial codes. Further, the researcher's initial codes were not clustered in a manner that suggested an integrated or thematic structure that converged toward a core code. Each code was treated as independent from the rest, suggesting that coding had not progressed beyond phenomenological reduction or horizontaling. Through peer debriefing, the researcher was able to cluster the codes so that they all converged toward a single, overarching code that was most representative of each participant's experiences. This was done after being asked by the peer debriefer to conceptualize each participant based on the entirety of each of their interviews.

After coming up with this concise conceptualization, I was better able to understand how each code related to one another. Specifically, after conceptualizing, I recognized that the description that I gave for each participant was perfectly in line with one of their respective codes that I had already identified. After identifying an overarching core code for each participant, it became clearly how the other codes clustered around or under that code, creating a more comprehensive picture of each participant.

The peer debriefer was also able to recognize methodological issues that the researcher was experiencing, such as leading the participants during interviews. The researcher asked many closed-ended questions, yes-or-no questions, and led the participants

to the researcher's understanding of them, rather than the participant's own understanding of their own experiences. This led the researcher to miss out on valuable data and quotes that could have enhanced the study. This could have been prevented by keeping to open ended questions, or simply allowing the participant to continue with their own narrative, without imposing my own understanding of their experiences. During the member check, participants were asked to clarify any discrepancies or inaccuracies that they noticed, and corrections were made accordingly.

Coding

In transcendental phenomenological method, there are three levels of coding: phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis (Glesne, 2016). The present study utilized these three levels of coding. In *phenomenological reduction*, I began the process by analyzing the interview transcript line-by-line (unit by unit), and labeling or naming what appeared to be captured in that unit of data. I reviewed each transcript and annotated the copy. Meaning units were underlined, circled, or highlighted, and themes that appeared to be emerging or recurring were written in the margins of each page.

Immersion

CS and I met three times, once to sign the initial consent, and two more times for the interviews. After each interview, I reviewed the audio recordings immediately after in order to get a sense of any themes that were emerging. During our initial meeting, I attempted to learn as much as I could about who she was, what she did, and the things she was interested in. I attempted to build as much rapport as I could during that short meeting so that she could feel comfortable during our interviews. Fortunately, CS and I were able to build a solid rapport quickly during the first interview. Specifically following the first interview, I

engaged in introspection about our interaction and brainstormed follow up questions based on responses that CS had provided. I took notes in order to cue myself, so as not to derail CS during the interview. During the second interview, I worked in my follow up questions as smoothly as possible. However, there were some questions that did not end up arising. This was because I did not want to interrupt the flow of the interview, and because I omitted some questions. There were a couple of topics that did not come up again, and they seemed as though they were not as important as the experiences that CS was sharing in the moment. CS was always open and willing to discuss any topic that came up, and was always able to provide clarity when I did not quite understand an aspect of her story.

Monkey4 and I ended up meeting twice. During the first meeting, we signed consents, and conducted both portions of the interview in one session. This was because Monkey4 felt that it would be best to get the interviews done in one session. Throughout the interview, I had to jot down my follow up questions that would change the course of the conversation. Because of the lost portion of one of my audio recordings, I had to request that Monkey4 and I meet a second time in order to redo that portion of the interview. Monkey4 was happy to oblige, and even attempted to provide similar if not verbatim responses to the interview questions that were lost. More importantly, it seemed that because she had already provided those response once, she was able to provide more depth the second time around. Monkey4 was always ready and willing to discuss all aspects of her experience, and provide more clarity when I asked for it.

Initially, this researcher stopped data analysis at the open coding stage. Each code was individualized and separate from the others, with little regard as to how they related to or clustered with each another. As mentioned above, my peer debriefer was able to point out

this oversight, and suggest a deeper look into the codes and how they might relate to each other. After a closer look at the codes, and having recognized the core code for each participant's data set, I was able to recognize how each code related to one another. Specifically, I was able to see how codes clustered and subclustered, and eventually converged toward a core code.

In *imaginative variation*, also called axial coding, I began clustering the codes generated during the phenomenological reduction phase into categories and subcategories. This entailed examining the interconnections between codes. I also looked for possible processes or cycles. I then grouped the themes and associated quotes from the interview transcripts into a separate document organizing the themes and subthemes.

During final *synthesis*, I tried to remove redundant codes and themes. I then generated final integrated coding lists within cases and then across cases. This was done using notecards with themes and subthemes written on them, taped down in clusters in order to visually organize and reorganize them in a way that was most representative of the participant's experience.

Peer Examination

In the present study, the peer examiner was able to assist me in recognizing themes and phenomena that were hidden in the data. Initially, my understanding of the participants' stories was more concrete and surface-level. The peer examiner was able to guide me in hearing between the lines and getting some of the deeper implications of the participants' stories. For example, my peer examiner mentioned a theme that may have been emerging in the data that I did not recognize, and it was the participant's ability to trust in herself and her own judgement. It was a realizing of one's own self-knowledge that may have allowed her to

move past her trauma, because she kinesthetically knew what it was that she needed in order to heal. This became an important theme that would have been overlooked had it not been for the peer examiner's more objective and knowledgeable viewpoint.

Generating the Narrative

The narrative that is generated using the thematic codes from the interviews is what is shared with the participants in order to assure that their emic experiences are being captured accurately (Glesne, 2016). As data is collected from the interviews, a more comprehensive understanding of all of the themes that have emerged will develop. From there, the researcher will construct a narrative using the codes that capture the essence of the experiential meanings of the participants and exemplary quotes that illustrate the importance of these themes. The narrative is meant to focus on what are the most important and salient aspects of the participant's experiences of the phenomenon being studied (Glesne, 2016).

Generating the narrative involved having open access to all of the codes, transcripts, and notes simultaneously, in order to ensure that all quotes were being used accurately to portray each participant's experiences. While generating the narrative, I found myself re-clustering and renaming some of the codes and themes, after realizing that there were some quotes that were being misrepresented by their codes. It appeared that even at this point, some of the codes were more surface-level, and that I could go deeper with the data analysis. Further, I noticed that some quotes seemed to fit better under different but related codes, and that some codes were meant to be on the same level as others, rather than under or above them, and vice versa. Completing the narrative involved even more data analysis, and as I was integrating all of the codes and quotes into a comprehensive narrative, I could see more

clearly how they all related to one another, and how I may have erred during the coding process.

I struggled with similar issues while writing both of my participants' narratives. Because I had begun each narrative with the same idea of what a narrative should be, I believe that I made the same mistake of writing an etic clinical case conceptualization rather than a summative integration of the emergent emic themes of each participant. This led to me having to make similar revisions, removing my own biases from the data. I did notice that when writing Monkey4's narrative, I had more difficulty with staying focused, as well as actually writing it out. I hypothesized that this was because Monkey4 did not offer as much data as CS did. However, in hindsight it seems more likely that I may have fully resolved Monkey4's codes before beginning the writing of that narrative. There was a lot of reorganizing that had to be done in order for the codes to make more sense in terms of Monkey4's experience. CS on the other hand, gave me a lot of information to work with, hopefully with the result of a deeper understanding of her story. The revisions suggested by my peer debriefer appeared to be simpler for CS than they were for Monkey4, suggesting that I may have done a slightly better job representing CS's experiences than I did for Monkey4's.

Through my experience with the present study, I found that generating the narrative required a deep understanding of qualitative inquiry, as well as a strong ability to switch gears from a more therapeutic role to one of a curious inquirer and dutiful reporter of participant experiences. I believe that I struggled with the above-mentioned issues because I had trouble taking off my therapist hat and putting on my researcher hat. I believe that if I

had done a better job with this task, I would not have written narratives that looked and felt like case conceptualizations.

This leads me to another lesson learned about narratives: they cannot be simplified into case conceptualizations. Generating the narrative requires the researcher to fully articulate the participant-observer role and report the participants' emic experiences with fidelity, without becoming completely engulfed by it. It was a difficult task to manage my own biases and pull only from what my participants had told me. To not make inferences, or assumptions, or clinical analyses about what I thought was going on, but to only listen to and report what my participant said was going on. I learned that generating the narrative is likely the most difficult part of a qualitative study, and one that cannot be taken lightly.

Member Check

Monkey4

Upon meeting with Monkey4, I explained the purpose of a member check. I told her that it was a time to read through the narrative and make sure that it was representative of her experience and her story. I let her know that if there was anything at all that she felt was incorrect, that I would change it to whatever she wanted me to. I told her that if there was anything that she wanted to add to the narrative, or anything that she wanted me to remove, I would do so. I let her know that the information in one of her interviews that she asked me not to include in the data was not included anywhere in the narrative.

At first, I was extremely nervous to conduct my member checks. It made me vulnerable, since I spent a great deal of time attempting to accurately represent each of their stories, and I would be checking with the source of the information.

I met with Monkey4 first. She emphasized that she remembered all of the conversations that we had that were also included in her narrative. She stated that she felt her narrative was an accurate representation of her emic experiences. Monkey4 was inquisitive regarding CS' responses, and I reminded her that I would not be able to divulge this information. She also asked about what I believe the findings to be; what it is that helped my participants change their attachment style. I was apprehensive about this question, as my study is not published yet. So, I spoke with Monkey4 in terms of what I thought was the catalyst for change in her narrative. Monkey4 was also concerned that her pseudonym that she chose for the study would devalue the present study, and asked me if she should change it. I informed her that in no way does her pseudonym cheapen the invaluable data that she had provided me, but that if she so pleased, she could choose to change her pseudonym. She said that she would leave it as is, as long as I did not feel that it would make my CRP seem less professional. With that, Monkey4 signed the final consents after I explained the purpose of it.

CS

When I met with CS, I explained the purpose of the member check. I told her that I wanted her to read through the narrative, and that anything that was incorrect, missing, or included when she did not want it to be, I would make the desired changes in order to maintain the authenticity of the narrative.

During CS' member check, I was nervous because as she was reading, she made a couple of changes to her narrative, but deferred her verbal notes until after she was done reading. Again, it was a nerve-racking experience given that I was checking the accuracy of her story with her, the source of the information. It turned out that she was editing typos, and

did not have any other changes to make regarding the actual content of her narrative. I was relieved about this, since CS expressed that her narrative was an accurate representation of her experiences.

The only request that CS had was that I go in and try to clarify some of her statements, since they were transcribed verbatim, and conversational dialogue is sometimes choppy when it is in visual format. I reminded her that removing parts of her dialogue could change the meaning of the quotes, but suggested that if she desired, she could review her narrative and make edits and remove sections that she felt made the sentences choppy and difficult to understand, and were not necessary to convey the meaning of the quote. CS decided against this, as she found it more important to make sure that her experiences, and her delivery of her experiences were accurate and authentic.

She emphasized again how she is not actively trying to keep her identity anonymous in the study, but this time mentioned that she is also not advertising her participation to others. I emphasized the importance for me to maintain her anonymity, and asked her to come up with pseudonyms for the people she mentioned in her narrative. CS and I had a long conversation regarding her narrative, as well as her experiences. We spoke about how she has normalized her trauma over the years, and is slightly confused when others are shocked by her past.

CS was also curious about my findings in the present study, and I again, had to tread carefully as my study is not published, and I could not disclose information about Monkey4 until after the study is finished. Rather, I talked with CS about her narrative, and what I gathered was her catalyst for change. She made suggestions regarding the findings, emphasizing the “hitting rock bottom” portion of her narrative, and cited some literature that

she had heard of that details how hitting rock bottom can act as a catalyst for change in some individuals. After I explained the purpose of the final consent, and disclosed that she is still able to terminate her participation in the study, CS signed the final consent form.

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

CS: I CAN TRUST MYSELF

My Parents Abused Me

The Legacy of My Father: Guilt, Shame, Absence

My Relationship With my Father Was not Great

CS endured psychological and physical abuse from her father throughout her childhood. He used guilt and shame in order to keep her in line.

He would say he's going to go kill himself and then he would leave...He said like "I'm gonna go drive off a cliff because I can't handle what you've done."

He would even become violent in order to direct her behavior.

There was one point when I was 12 where I couldn't stop crying and he hit me really hard, would slap me, and he pulled my hair and I was just crying hysterically in the car.

My Father Was Never Really Present in My Life

CS' father was absent for much of her life and, despite the abuse she experienced in her relationship with him, she also longed for his protection.

When I was a little kid I actually had no idea who he was. I remember asking my babysitter, "Who is that man?" 'cause he was never really around.

When he wasn't there, the bad mother would come out and she would scream and chase me out and stuff, and then my dad would not really be there. He would leave and then we wouldn't see him for a day or two.

Everything Turned Around After One Specific Incident

Following the incident in which her father hit her and pulled her hair in the car, CS stated,

The next morning I refused to look at him, I refused to talk to him, and then he had this talk with me. [He] came back with a CD player and was like, "I will never hit you

again. I'm never gonna do that again." And then from that point my relationship with him was really great.

My Dad and I Had an Alliance During My Teenage Years

After that incident, CS father did what he could to protect her from her mother.

My dad would just take me and then he would just, we would go eat lunch somewhere and that would be good.

He even made it a point to save her from herself.

He saw me, that I was hitting myself against the wall... Then he came and just was like, "Let's go right now. Let's go."

CS' father created a relationship with her that was supportive in ways that a teenage CS needed him to be.

I would go, stay up the entire time and then he would come and take me out to breakfast and he would make me breakfast and whatnot, and just be like "Let's talk." My relationship with my dad was definitely us kind of bashing on my mom and him being like, "Yes. She's horrible." I'm like, "Yeah, she is horrible." But just having that commonality that I wasn't the horrible one 'cause I think it's almost like he switched it where I was the bad one and then he was like, "No, you're not the bad one. She is the bad one." And it just transferred over to her."

He Will Never Admit that He Was Abusive Because He Does Not Believe It.

Despite how far they have come, CS' father is still unable to acknowledge that he may not have been the best father to her.

He thinks that he was the best father in the world....He'll never ever admit to that [the abuse].

CS' notes that since her father denies the abuse she has witnessed and received from him, there is no opportunity to discuss these situations either, to bring closure to them.

He'd be like "I had this wonderful dream. Your mother was murdered. There was a knife and she just—" He would go into this detail....and so he denies he did that...It gets swept under the rug.

The Moth and the Butterfly: Good Mom Versus Bad Mom

All My Life, I Have Only Known Extremes

CS' mother suffered from mental illness.

“She’s borderline for sure.”

This led CS' mother to fluctuate between being the loving mother that CS needed and a cruel and unrelenting force that tormented CS without respite.

She switches to these extremes...She was never in between...It was like the most loving mom that you could imagine, but then like a light switch, it was like...she was this evil creature who, if anyone died...if anyone got sick, it was all my fault.

CS spoke of a mother as having a “dual personality....She just flips and then she’s like you’re...you’re evil, and then all of a sudden, you’re amazing...We put high security locks on my door because when she is this good person she’s like, “No, we gotta keep you safe because we don’t want the evil spirit or the moth to come out.”

My Mom Was Never Safe for Me

CS' mother was volatile at best and physically abusive at her worst.

Sometimes it would be something small where I would just lean back and there was a piece of lead on the floor from a pencil and I just would go like—I'd push my chair back and the piece of lead would mark up the floor a tiny bit and I had no idea, but then that was enough to bring out the whoever it was—the moth or the whatever—the evil spirit. [She'd] change into the evil spirit...Or I would go take a bath and my little sister was gonna take a bath first but then I didn't know, so I went to the bathroom first and then that triggered a bunch of crazy stuff. So, nothing like, I mean there was triggers but it wasn't, it was just whenever I interfered with this plan that she had.

It seemed that any minor infraction could set her mother off, and CS never knew what that might be. She lived in fear that something she did could cause “the moth” to come out, and CS feared the moth and what it was capable of doing.

It was more like she would bite me. She would do similar things that the guy told her to do, like suffocate me. So it wasn't necessarily like punching, but it would be like hold [me] down and [try to] suffocate [me]. Wrap [me] up in a blanket and suffocate [me] kinda thing. And then sometimes I would be like she would do this thing where she put her hands on here [pointed to her arms] and then she would squeeze really hard, or on the side and what not, and she would do stuff like that and shake me really hard.

Growing up, CS was targeted by her mother. This led CS to embark on a search for an explanation for her mother's erratic and abusive behaviors.

It kinda sounds like she did [have dissociative identity disorder], but I don't think she necessarily—but I don't think so because it was controlled, because it wasn't with anybody else, it was specifically with me. So, she didn't really do that with my older sister or my younger sister and not with my dad. It was specifically with me. So, the whole fact that it was controlled in that manner kinda tells me that it wasn't.

I Repressed Things to Survive. While providing context for some of her stories, CS realized that she had some mental blocks preventing her from being able to recall things accurately.

My sister would have bruises and I'm trying to think if I had any bruises...but I know that when I was in really abusive relationships I would ignore bruises like that, so I don't know if there was. I don't know. I really, I want to say no, she didn't, but then I don't really know.

I just don't remember...I forgot about how intense that depression was.

She Believed I Was Selfish

When confronted with instruction or suggestions from CS, CS's mother often attempted to turn the argument back on CS, claiming that CS had selfish intentions:

My sister was pregnant and I was just like, "Mom, I want you to have—" I wanted her to get this book because I wanted her to mend things with my older sister, and it was an expensive book. It was the cute little paper book for newborn babies....and I was just like, "Oh, you should get that for Mary because she would really appreciate it." My mom was like, "No, you want that for you, when you have a child." "No. I'm just trying to help you settle things with Mary," and then she's just like, "No, you're just trying to project your own." I was like, "Why aren't you believing me?" It was

something really seemingly simple, but then it just got to the point where I was like, “Why can't you just believe me?”

Now that I'm older, and so when I was talking to her about Sally, she immediately was like, “You were only—The reason why you're protecting her is because she's actually you, and that's why you want to protect her.” I'm like, “I see where you're coming from. It's also because she is a baby. It doesn't matter what happened to me. She is a baby and she needs that.” Then she goes into this whole thing about—She's like, “CS, does she really represent you, and that because you are angry at me and your father—,” and I'm like “I am angry at you, but I'm still very—but I am—I care about me as an individual,” and she goes, she's like “I'll be nice to Sally because I'm really trying to be nice to you.” I'm like, “You're missing the entire point,” and then it just escalated into this thing where she was just like “CS, why do you—” where I'm like, “Stop giving me psychological advice. Why are you deflecting from the fact that I just—I'm not trying to make this about me. I'm trying to protect Sally,” and then she made this into this whole thing about how I'm trying to learn to forgive, when I'm like, “You're not respecting anything that I'm saying.”

In these stories, it seems that CS's mother believed that CS had selfish intentions when advocating for her mother and sister's relationship, and for her niece. Her mother accused her of having a hidden agenda, saying that CS wanted the book that she suggested she buy for her sister for herself, and that CS only wanted her to be nice to Sally because she was represented by Sally.

She Blamed Me for Everything

CS spoke about how she felt blamed for her parents' failed relationship.

I Was the Reason She Hated My Father. CS told a story of her mother, and the perceived betrayal by her father:

My mom also would convince me, because my birth, I'm the reason why she hates my father, very explicitly.

When I was born, she blames my dad, because my dad promised that no one—She could spend time with me—and then at the last minute, he allowed my grandparents to come, and she was mad at him. She holds that moment, and specifically my birth, and she used to hold me as the symbol of when she started to hate, and so to me, she tells a story as she's the victim.

I Was the Reason for Her Abusive Behavior Toward Me. CS's mother was very explicit in blaming CS for her physical, verbal, and psychological abuse against her.

She said she used to scream at me because I would just look like my father, as a baby. She just, she would just say—She said she would see me, she would see my dad's face, and just start screaming and shouting at me as a baby, and trying to shake me.

She would say, "I killed the butterfly," or like "I killed the good part of your mom." It's like the bad mother killed [the good part of my mother]. "I killed the good mother because you forced me to do it." And I would find her on the floor convulsing, trying to convince me that I somehow killed her...I'd come home and there would be a, she kind of set up the death scene of a butterfly.

CS' mother also searched for answers in past lives.

[She'd say,] "Well, CS, in a past life, you hurt me, and that's why we have these issues." That was our therapy, is like sorting through past lives. It was very confusing, very strange. So, she would try to get people to clear my past life, and the fact that I hurt her in a past life, and that's why she's seeking revenge on me, kind of thing. Like, okay. I have no idea. That really—That did mess with my head, for sure, because I was like, "What? I didn't. I don't think I did something, but I don't know, because it's a past life."

I Was the Reason for Health Problems in the Family. CS's mother went to great lengths to ensure that CS believed that health problems in the family were her fault as well.

She definitely did [believe it was my fault when people died or got sick]...and she would say, "When I die, know that it's your fault. You killed me." That's—I think that's setting up that whole death scene, where she was trying to put more emphasis on it.

My grandfather had a heart attack, and she broke some god, the statue gods. I don't know. One of those--Yeah, and she was dusting it for my birthday, and she said that the reason why my grandfather had a heart attack was because of my birthday.

She Expected Me to Join Her in Her Hatred

CS' mother tries to get her to be angry with, and hate, whomever she is currently upset with.

She's trying to get me to be angry at my cousin, because his father didn't get this contract thing, and now she's upset with him, and so she's trying to convince me that

my cousin is evil because that's his son. I'm like, "But that's my cousin. I'm not going to hate my cousin for something like that," which she wants me to.

She Was Painfully Particular—Almost Obsessive

At one point, CS also considered that her mother may have an obsessive/compulsive personality type because of her meticulousness.

She seriously spends weeks, because she's very particular. She needs this can from this place. She cannot use any old measuring cup. She needs to be a very specific thing, and she flies everything in from different places, so that she can have a specific measuring cup, because she doesn't want to use any other measuring cup.

She Never Stops! "She does this thing still where she screams at you and you ask her to stop, and you just go 'stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop.' And she doesn't stop."

There was just texts where I'm just—When Trump got elected, I was just like, "Look. I need to mourn. I don't want this. I don't like what he represents. I don't know if he necessarily is the best person, and I don't care what you have to say about it, but I'm not in a place that I feel okay right now," and she's a huge Trump supporter. Instead of just giving me my space, and my sister, my older sister space, too, what she does is she sends us—She's all about fake news, right? She, instead of just giving us our space, she sends us an article about how Bill Cosby is—[how] the media's targeting him, and it's all fake, about all the rapes, and stuff like that. I was just like, "Why is any—You're trying to tell us that Bill Cosby didn't rape all these people" as a response to say that we are overreacting to Trump? I'm like, "Stop it. Just stop." Then she gets—Then she sends us more articles, and I'm like, "Stop it." She basically tells us how we give in to fake news, and I'm like, I said, "I don't want to talk about it," and then she keeps going. She starts blaming us that the reason why we don't want to talk about it is because we don't...we don't like to put in research, and then I'm like, "I don't care. Stop talking about it," and then she says—She kind of stops, and she goes into how we don't have an open mind, and then I'm like, "Just stop," and then she goes into all of this stuff about how it's—I don't want to listen because I'm resentful, and blah, blah, blah, blah. By the end, I'm like screaming at her, saying, "Stop it. I'm saying stop. I just need you to stop," and she just won't.

I'm trying to get her attention and trying to be like "Please stop. Please stop." I would hit my head against the wall and I would keep hitting it, I would keep hurting myself. I would stab myself and I was just trying to get any attention for her to stop.

She [mom] won't, and she's [sister] like, what do I have to do? Do I have to bang my head? My sister has banged her head. I banged my head to the point where I was slightly unconscious, and then my dad actually pulled a gun to his head, begging her

to stop, and she won't. It's like, that. There's nothing, and I've asked her about it. I'm like, okay, you know you get into this. What is it? She's like, I just don't feel. I don't feel anything. I don't really. It's just, I don't feel, and she feels like she'll die, even if I was like, even if my dad, he has a gun to his head, he said he's going to shoot himself, a loaded gun, and your life is still more important than the fact that his actual life is on the line, and she still doesn't. She just doesn't get it.

This behavior even affected CS' education, because CS and her mother would often fight "when I got home from school all the way till 4AM...It would get really intense around midnight."

I actually ended up going to about 16 different schools because I couldn't get up in the morning. She could barely get up in the morning...I couldn't concentrate in school, I couldn't really do anything in school and I just progressively fell behind in each and every school, and then....my mom does not have a lot of tact. She would offend the teachers. The teachers then would say something about me missing school and that would hurt my feelings a lot because I'm like, it's not that I'm not trying, part of it is, but it's like I can't even do my homework because I'm screaming with my mom...I would be embarrassed to go to school, and then fall even more behind until then I had to switch again. And then it just kept on happening again, and again, and again, until I got to high school and then I ended up dropping out.

CS' mother feels that everything being accurate, everyone being on the same page, and everyone acknowledging that she is correct is more important than people's lives:

My mom's like no, I'm willing to admit that, when I'm wrong, and she is, but they go through crazy, crazy, crazy things to prove that they're right. My mom, this one time, my mom, my dad was like, "There's a stop sign," so that's why I stop, and she's like, "No, there isn't," and blah, blah, blah. She was like, I need you to—They fought about it, and then she was like, "I need you to go back. I need you to take a picture," like circle every single little spot. She went on Google Maps, and just did everything that she could to prove that she was right, or she wanted to be proven that she was wrong, and you have to do this with everything with her. It doesn't matter even. She'll admit when she's wrong, but you have to seriously have a whole document, and prove everything, and she'll do whatever it takes to any single little thing, like, "Mom, you told me to be here at 3:00," and she's like—let's say you just get the time slightly wrong. She's like, "No, you said 3:02," and then she'll like search back, take pictures, screenshot, and record every single little thing, and then she will not believe you unless you do the exact same thing back. It's really hard to talk to her about things, or just even casually, like maybe it's okay. She's just like, "No." You need to come up with this huge list of why it has to, why it is okay, and it's very exhausting, because you don't necessarily always have time to do that, but my dad kind of will sometimes,

and he'll just be like—He went out. He took pictures of every single shot. My mom's like, "They could have moved the thing," or something.

She'll admit it. When I talk to her, she thinks of it as—She needs to know. It's as important, if not more important, than someone's life. She's like fully—She admits it. She's like, "No." It is more important than anything else. It's more important than the baby, even. It's like, what? Are you kidding me? Are you telling me a little baby, and—I just recently got into a fight with her about that, where I was like, what?...The fight that she had with my brother-in-law was that. [It was] not like her life, but it was—The whole fight with my brother-in-law was that she wanted Sally, my niece, to crawl, and because she thinks she'd read all of this research about how babies not crawling affects their development, and so she was going off, and about all of that research. He was saying that, well, if she crawls, she crawls. If she doesn't, she doesn't, but stop trying to force her to crawl. That just made my mom explode with anger, right, and then he got really upset. They just started shouting at each other.

And then I was like I got into a yoga accident where I...I was trying to do this...I was showing people how to do a posture, and I was just not into [it]. I just wasn't very mindful, and so I rolled onto my face, and I tweaked my neck, and I didn't want to tell my mom because she's not very—She'll freak out if she hears stuff like that. I got in the middle of them, and she tried to push me out of the side, which I was like, it would be fine if my neck didn't hurt, but she was just like, get me out, because I need to fight in front of Cameron. I just see Sally there, like, "I'm a baby. What is going on?" I was just like, "You can't fight like that in front of a baby. You just can't. That's not okay. You can't put the baby in the middle like that, and just objectify the baby as though she doesn't. Who cares about her?" and she, my mom, just said that, and so I talked to her for a while, and then she basically did admit that—verbatim—that her, that her need to be, to prove Cameron right or wrong and her need to scream at Cameron is more important than the niece, my niece's basically emotional health. Yeah, because her—She says that she feels like if she doesn't get it, then she'll feel like she's...that she's going to somehow explode. It's very life or death for her. It's like, and so she's like, it's not life or death for Sally. It's life or death for me, though. It's like, but it's not. Yeah. 'Cause it's her obsession, is with exploding, or dying, because she's saying, "If I don't prove people wrong, if I don't let people know that I'm right, then it's like, I don't...I won't exist anymore." Then there's the compulsion.

She Refused to Acknowledge Her Downfalls

Like her father, CS's mother either does not recognize her faults as such, or refuses to admit them.

Recently my mom came, and she got into this huge fight with my brother-in-law, and my mom doesn't even acknowledge that the fight even happened.

I don't know what it is, but she has a tendency to sometimes make up stories. She sometimes just forgets something happened. She totally forgot that she said something really horrible to me, and that she was really mean to me, and the next day she just expects me to—I don't know if she consciously knows it, or if she just forgets, but she just doesn't remember. It's like, your ego like, you feel a little bit crazy because you're like, you just said this crazy thing to me, and now you're acting like I—It never happened, and you're acting like I'm out of control because I'm still mad about this.

She won't ever admit it, but she needs a lot of control over everything, and she doesn't think that, but she really does, and so it almost feels like this...It's a power struggle.

My Mother's Behavior Continues to Affect Me

CS reported moments where she feels as though people are “not respecting” what she is saying or not understanding that she is “done with something.” She spoke of times when she accidentally called her current partner “mom,” because of the familiar emotions that she felt at that time. She noted that it happened on three separate occasions.

I've accidentally called Adam “mom” and it's usually when he's trying to be very logical and not getting the point that—He's overstepping his boundaries and he's not meaning to. We got into this fight recently where I just needed him to just stop saying whatever he was saying, and what he was saying to me was, it was logical, and what he was...It was for good reasons, but he just didn't get that difference that I needed him to—That it was bothering me, and so I called him, “Come on, Mom,” and he was just like, “Oh.” Then he instantly moved to back off, and be like, “Okay.”

Yeah, and it's whenever I don't really—I'm done with something, and I didn't make it clear enough, because it's almost like whenever I feel like someone is not respecting what I'm saying, or if somebody wasn't respecting, just didn't get it, that it just makes me be like, “Oh, my gosh. You're not—” They keep on pushing it on me, and they're not getting that I don't want to talk about it, or I...I'm not ready, and I know I'm not ready, and I'm just saying, “Please back off. It's bothering me.” In his head, he's like, “No, no, no. If you understood this, you'll feel better at the end.” I'm like, “No. No, no, no, no. Stop it Mom, Adam.”

What Adam and I were fighting about recently where he just got on my case, and he's like, “You need to realize that your mom does love you, but she's just mentally ill.” I was like, “I can't think that way right now. I just need to think that she doesn't love me, because that's just—I need to feel that and think that right this second.” Adam was like, “Yes, but I think if you understood that if she was—She loves you,” and I'm

like, “No, I can't.” She's just like, “Yes, but if you—” I was like, “No. I'm telling you, I can't [do it—not] right this second.” He's just like—Then that's when I called him Mom.

In those moments, when Adam pushes the issue and CS asks him to stop, CS says she returns to those times when her mother was on a tirade. In those moments, CS noted that she was unable to differentiate her mother from her partners, and acted as she would with her mother.

CS' growing awareness of her mother's behaviors helped her to recognize that she was in unhealthy situations and relationships. Each time, she would have that feeling of familiarity.

I had one specific relationship where he acted exactly like my mom, where I had to force the door shut cause they both did the same [thing]....It didn't matter how much I was hurting them...like “Get your hand out,” but it would be like I would keep on slamming and then inch by inch they would still come in and he did that and then he actually held me down, and his thing was suffocation, and I was like “Woah....”

I Played a lot of the Things I Have Had with Her Through My Ex. CS spoke about being more capable of dealing with her mother while dating her most abusive ex-boyfriend.

I think in relationship to my mom, it kind of, I played out a lot of the things that I've had with her through him, and it was a lot of that transference of her because she has a lot of guilt about what she did to me when I was younger, even though she still does it, similar to how he did.

CS spoke about the similarities between her ex-boyfriend and her mother, and about how she found it easier to set boundaries with her mother while she was dating him.

But, then, my ex passed away...He was the one that reminded me the most of my mom, and when he passed away, I haven't really been able to get back to that point of seeing her in that way. I don't know if it's in a way because when he was alive, I would be able—I could go almost shift some of the tension that I had with my mom onto him, so it was easy to—Since it was dispersed, I could deal with it separately, and come to something together, but it was almost like when he died, it all went back

to my mom, and I couldn't see her as this patient. I saw her back as “why don't you love me, Mom, because if you loved me, you would stop” kind of thing. There was a moment, but it switched back once he passed away.

CS hypothesized that the “dispersal” of emotions seemed to make it easier to distance herself emotionally from her mother. It seems as though when she had another source of love or affection, she did not need this kind of validation from her mother, and thus was better able to think objectively and be unbothered by her abuse and manipulation.

Because I think I wasn't looking [to] her for any validation...The thing she does all the time is that she spends all day cooking, and then...I go to grab salt when she wants me to use shoyu...[and] she goes like, “You are being so ungrateful.” When she says stuff like that, I’m just, I don’t know what I did wrong...Before, when I was able to make that separation, I was like “Oh, that’s just her going through one of her episodes.” I was able to objectify way more versus “what did I do wrong? Why are you getting mad at me?”...So it comes back to how I felt when I was younger, which is like “what did I do wrong? Is there something wrong with me?”

Boundaries Keep Me from Getting Hurt. Among the changes that CS made in order to improve her life’s circumstances, setting boundaries with her mother was one of the most important. CS mentioned the need to keep certain walls up with her mother. CS explained the importance of “setting healthy boundaries, because I don't want to get toppled over. I don't want to get hurt at the end, and for you to be free ends up hurting everyone else.”

CS spoke about treating her mother as a patient in order to mitigate some of her mother’s unhealthy behaviors.

We were learning about mental illnesses [in school] and stuff like that, and I realized my mom had a mental illness. To look at her as someone who has a mental illness, instead of treating her like a normal human—When I realized that she's not a normal functioning human, and so I can't treat her like a normal functioning person, I started treating her differently, and we got along a lot better...I didn't look at her as my mom who I need, like I want love from my mom. I looked at her as almost like a patient, where I was like, “Okay, did you do this? Okay. Try this. Let's only talk about this. Let's try this. Let's do this. I'm going to talk to you differently,” and she was—We got

along pretty well, and she actually was getting a lot better...She was not stepping on people's toes. She was actually communicating with people, and there was just a huge shift in her.

She Tries to Fight My Boundaries. Throughout all of CS's attempts at boundary setting, her mother fought them:

"Mom tries to pull me back there and I'm like, 'Don't do that. I'm obviously the only person who's talking to you about this and I don't have to talk to you.' And I still stop her. I'm like, 'Don't do that. I'm not going down that road with you.' I don't let my mom have an inch. I'll give her a millimeter and if she starts to run with it, I'm like 'Nope. Done. We're not talking.'"

She started to be like, I'm—How I hurt her...how no one cares about her, how I'm ungrateful because I don't really see how much she's changed, and how much she's trying, and how she—I have to do it this way, and how I'm stifling her by trying to—That's like her huge thing. I'm stifling her, that she doesn't—She isn't free to be herself, and to live life the way that she wants to, and to be happy because I'm stifling her, because I'm putting all these restrictions around how she has to act around everybody.

We Are Not Doing This Anymore

The theme "We're not doing this anymore" came up in several different contexts including romantic and familial relationships. CS spoke about moments where she felt as though aspects of her life were not going the way that they should, and that change was necessary.

You know, it's okay that this happened, but you're going to have to change. Commit to change.

For instance, throughout her childhood years, her mother often physically abused her, and would hold her down and attempt to suffocate her.

I don't know where this...happened...There's certain points where my mom would physically get into this really bad fights and I would be vicious as well because I was like... "I'm gonna attack you back...are you kidding me? I'm not going to be in this position where I'm not gonna do anything back..."...But then it got to a point where I clawed her and I felt so awful because she had to wear make-up and I thought I permanently damaged her face and I felt so, so awful...but then I knew at that

particular point that I was now creating the situation...I was like okay, yes, she may be going into the moth, but I should at least let her finish it and see it through to see if she actually is gonna come after me instead of just assuming that it's going to be a fight—which was great because after I decided not to do that...I think the physical things stopped, and I don't know if it's because...I was bigger than her, or because she knew that she just, there's no way she could win a physical fight with me anymore 'cause she couldn't...When I was little, it was easy to hold me down to suffocate me, but at that particular point I was way stronger. So I don't know if that was the real reason or if it's because—you know, now looking back on it that could be the reason. But I thought it was because oh okay, maybe I matured and let her not, just finish it, and made sure that she wasn't coming to attack me first.

CS used moments like these as learning experiences; moments where she recognized that the patterns that were being perpetuated in her life were detrimental to herself and her relationships.

Another instance of these moments was related to an ex-boyfriend:

Then when I started to do my individual therapy was when I went through probably my most physically abusive relationship, and he was really horrible.... [He] threw my printer at me, put his hand on my throat....[It] was my professor...In class, she told everyone to write down a list of everything that you need in a relationship and everything that you don't need in a relationship—you 100% will not allow. When I made that list...I realized that he hit every single thing that was a deal breaker...I didn't want to admit I was in an abusive relationship...That was the hardest part of it—admitting that this was abusive, and...it was almost like I did this to myself. I got into a relationship and I stayed in a relationship that was abusive, and I didn't want to think that, but after that, that night, I broke up with him, or said the next time that he does something, he hurts me physically, I'm going to break up with him. The next day, he did something, so then that was that.

After creating that list of “deal breakers,” CS was able to recognize the type of relationship she was in and use that knowledge to get herself out of it.

Perhaps one of the most monumental “we’re not doing this anymore” moments was triggered by an ex-boyfriend who raped and abused her for years.

I think that where I made the flip, where I knew I had to change something, was ...New Year's...Peter said that he was going to come, and he said that, because we already broke up...It was horrible and I was a mess, and he would say...“Hey, I'll come over. I just miss cooking with you. Can we just cook?” I'd be like,

“Okay...that's fine.” At first, I was really hesitant and I told him, “I don't know. I feel really hurt. Maybe when I'm ready.” He'd be like, “Okay, I'll just wait for you to be ready,” and so finally one day, I was like, “Okay. You know what? We can cook,” and he was so excited, and he was like, “Okay. Let's set a time and a place... We can be in a very safe environment. Other people can be there so you feel safe.”...And then the time came and he never showed up, and I never heard from him. This kept on happening, where he was like—I was like, “Hey, I have a show.” He'd be like...“I'm going to be there for you. Don't worry.” Never showed up.

The same thing happened on New Year's, and he was like...“I'll be there. I have to drop this stuff for you anyway...I will be there and I'll see you, and maybe we can just have a mellow thing. Don't worry, and I'm not going to bail on you again.” I was like “Okay”...and he bailed on me, and I remember that it was horrible, because I started crying, and it was the most I've cried in a really long time, where I was just like “I can't believe he did this to me again. I just can't believe it.” I almost felt a little hysterical, and I don't know what prompted me. I was listening to a song on...my iPhone...and then I remember somehow going to the bathroom, looking myself in the mirror, and just crying still hysterically, crying, but somehow I looked at my eyes, and then I don't know what happened.

I don't know what happened with me, but just all of a sudden, there was this rush, where after looking at myself in the mirror, just this rush of being like, “You know, it's okay that this happened, but you're going to have to change, commit to change,” and I don't know why it was a very spiritual experience. Just I knew that from that moment, I was going to change. I just stared at myself, crying for about an hour, looking at myself in the mirror, just being like, something is different. I don't know what it is. I don't know if I reached that rock bottom, and then I came back up, or what specifically happened. It felt very spiritual. I don't know how else to describe it, but I just—It was just like a moment I just looked at myself, and was like, there's something behind me.

There's some type of support. “I'm going to—It's going to be okay, and I'm going to, even if I feel like I'm a nobody, even if I feel like all of it's my fault, it's...Maybe it's not,” and from that moment, from that New Year's, I made a promise to myself that, and I was—Don't get me wrong. It wasn't like a miraculous, “now I feel better”—It was still like a...“I'm ridiculously sad. This is going to suck, and everything's going to suck,” and I'm like “I can't believe it. I'm so heartbroken,” and I'm superstitious because my mom would say, “If your New Year's is bad, then the whole year will be bad.” It's like uh...I'm like “Gosh, so much pressure for this one day,” so it was like “Oh, my gosh, and now it's horrible because I've been crying,” but lo and behold, after that point, my whole life flipped.

Hitting Rock Bottom

Part of what made these moments, particularly the latter one, so potent for CS was that “it was very much just that moment by myself, completely done and lost.” CS spoke about it being a “spiritual experience,” one that led to her “whole life flipping.”

I don't know what happened that day. There was just something that happened, because it wasn't like—Don't get me wrong. I had really good friends and they—I know that they contributed, but there wasn't like there is this huge thing that other—Even reaching the rock bottom, it was just—Maybe it was I just finally had enough, and maybe it was like—The only way, I've never felt so low, and maybe—Actually, now that I think about it, I think it's similar. It is. That was it. I've never felt so low. I've never felt so bad, and there—I don't know if I can go down any lower. I don't think that there is any lower.

Finding Intimacy with Myself

CS spoke about an intimacy with herself that was sparked by moments where she felt at her lowest. She stated:

I don't know if it's spiritual, like that's the best thing I can put, but these moments of just intimacy with myself, just by myself, that it's just, again, crazy things. These circumstances happen and it just completely changed me. It set me on a whole different path. I don't know what was around it.

I just don't know how to describe it. It was just a shift. I felt like I was a whole different person, and there was an element of God...but I remember almost as though I was responding. It sounds a little bit weird, but especially during that time when I was looking at myself crying in the bathroom, I just remember being like, “Okay. I don't know who I was talking to.” It was like “Okay. I hear you. I get it. I understand. Whatever it is, I get it. I just—I'll follow whatever you need me to do,” which is a really weird thing, considering I'm not religious, and I'm not putting too much into it, but it was still that moment where I just said something to myself, and I've had these experiences still.

Although she mentioned that she did not know who exactly she was speaking to, it seems as though she was speaking to an inner self that she had not known existed prior to these moments:

Exactly, and then it's like, here you go, CS. Come to the surface. I'm in charge right this second. Listen to me, because I'm the one you really want to listen to.

I was...almost like I was operating from the subconscious, and it was very much from a Freudian perspective. It was very much my ego came through. Yeah. It was just—I was not living in my anything else. I was just so connected to that, that it just came through. Every spiritual—'Cause even when I was dreaming, right, it's more in the subconscious, and then I get up, and I'm like, “Whoa! I feel different.”

It Has Made Me Create More Trust within Myself

The theme “learning to trust myself” recurred in contexts where she recognized that she needed to make changes, and put more faith in herself in order to create a better life for herself.

I don't know what happened, but I...was really insecure about the way that I looked, really insecure, but I was just like, “You know what? I'm just going to just try to just pretend. I'm just going to pretend,” and—At the time, [that store] was considered this good-looking place, and they recruited me twice, and I was like, “You know what? I'm just going to take the job, and I'm going to be one of their quote unquote ‘models.’” I was like, “Okay. Just going to go for it,” and then I don't know what happened. Then I heard Sustainable UH needed somebody, and I was like...Do art? I was just like, “I'm going to do it. I'm just going to do it,” and then all of a sudden my group of friends changed, and I had all of these friends...and then all of a sudden I was in charge of all of these different things. The next thing I know, my life was just completely different. I don't know what it was, because the other thing, too, was because I'm a high school dropout. I was really insecure that everyone would find out that I'm a high school dropout. I just got really involved in school and became this person who cared that much more about their classes, and put in the best work possible, and it just—I don't know, and then ever since then, it's been this—Then I entered the pageant, and then it went horrible, but I just kept on changing. I just shifted the way that I thought about myself.

CS eventually moved on to recognize that she could trust herself and her instincts regarding relationships.

It was the healthiest towards, right before he died...so it was just really hard because it was in the midst of me kind of adjusting to it and then he died. I was like “okay, this is a whole new world that I have to open up,” but I have noticed that my relationship with my mom, with my boyfriend, with everybody else, is completely changed for the better....I have noticed that it's made me create more trust within myself and, therefore, it's kind of helped create healthier boundaries with everybody, trusting that

I don't necessarily need the love of my mom or Peter. It doesn't change the fact that I love both of them, but I don't need it and that I'm okay, and to trust my instincts about stuff, and that they don't have this crazy—they don't determine that—that I can trust myself, that I can determine that.

and then progressively, my relationships got better, so the next guy I was with, he was okay. He wasn't the best, and he wasn't horrible. Yeah, and then just continuously, it built up until I met Adam, and Adam's been the healthiest relationship I've ever had.

This is the Healthiest Relationship I Have Had

The Relationship Is the Priority

In her current relationship, CS finds many exceptions to what she witnessed in past relationships and observed in the relationship between her parents. The main difference, however, is how she and her partner have put their relationship first.

Adam and I definitely don't care. We just don't care if he's right [or I'm right. I mean], don't get me wrong. I think I like to feel right, and I'm sure he likes to feel right, too. I'm not saying that we're like...it doesn't matter who's right and wrong. It's more that...we just don't have that level of caring that I'm right or I'm wrong. It's just not a priority...We'll put our relationship as a priority over who's right, and who's wrong, and who cares.

She also mentioned that although Adam “doesn't suck up,” he does not allow this to disrupt their relationship.

Adam is not—He doesn't suck up. He's not like, “Hey, man. Cool. Let's hang out.” He's more like “what the hell,” but he also is just more respectful because he acknowledges that it's still my sister, and I—Regardless of whatever I feel towards my brother-in-law, I don't really care, because what matters more to me is my sister, and Adam respects that.

Despite Differences, He Remains Engaged

CS noted that even when her partner does not understand where she is coming from, he tries to comfort her.

Yeah. So I always—usually that's how if we do have I fight. That's how it goes. I have to break it down for him 'cause, again, he's very logical, not very emotional, and

so if I can break it down intellectually why I'm upset, he gets it. He fully gets it. If I just react emotionally, he wants to be there but he's completely confused.

I've had a very different past than he's had and there's a part of him that just doesn't get it because he just hasn't been through that, and so I think when there is a misinterpretation between us there's probably a part of me that's like, "'Cause you don't get that I'm different than you." And then...what goes...through his head is like, "No, I may not get you, but look how much we've created together and there's other things that are important about relationships besides that." And then I'll probably interpret that as in, "Why don't you want to take the moment to get to know me better or to get to know about these things that make me up." And then his thoughts are, "But I still don't get it." And then it just escalates into this whole thing where it's like, maybe I'm too emotional, maybe I'm too this, or maybe I'm this and that, and then he'll be like, "No. I just don't get it." Yeah. Then it's kind of like, why do I have to make him, why can't I see also that there is other good things about our relationships besides this one, this one part."

He Is Willing to Spend Time to Resolve Conflicts

Throughout the interviews, CS spoke about feeling comfortable talking with her current partner, and using this as a way to settle most of their disputes: "I've never had this happen where it's like 3AM and I'm still talking." She spoke with a grateful tone about her partner's willingness to listen and fight to understand her. "He'll stay up for hours with me late into the night just to talk with me and go through with it."

It Is Not About Understanding or Agreeing

It is no longer about debating who is right and who is wrong. When CS and her partner do not agree about something, they can still provide support and affection to each other.

[He will say,] "Are you okay?" and try to touch my elbows. "No. I don't want to be touched." But then I was like, "I want a hug." And then I was like, "Can I just put my head on your shoulder?" and he's just like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." And then that was it... We talked. It was like very much a softening like, "I'm sorry." And then we'll go into childhood and be like "okay this is why I'm feeling that way and I think this is why you're feeling this way," and then we'll usually feel better and then go to sleep.

They are able to reach for each other even when their differences reflect their differences in personality or interests.

He just came and he, so it was a mood board workshop and in order—We had everyone tap into what kind of mood they want to set for the new year and we had everyone look through newspapers but he's an artist, so he just came in and drew if anyone wanted something specific for their mood board and that meant a lot that he was just willing to sit there and not get paid, 'cause he's very money focused, right? So he's like money, money, like, "Am I gonna get anything for this? No, then what's the point?" But then he did and even though he didn't get paid or anything he just came to support and draw.

Yeah, and it's not that he doesn't want to, it's just that he's having this block, and I think part of it is because from, you know, analyzing him, I think a part of it is because I'm like the opposite of repressing. I'm like, "No. I'm gonna deal with it. I'm gonna feel it right here, right now." And I'm sure it makes him be like, "Okay." 'Cause he's even said when I talk about things and it opens up stuff for him, and he's not afraid of that, but it takes him a while to be like, "Why are you not repressing this?"

For CS and her partner, it is enough to just love each other and be together, without completely understanding where the other may be coming from.

He just doesn't understand why I need certain things...because he just hasn't been there before. He's just more insensitive I would say...He hasn't been exposed to a much and then the other part is he just, that's just the way that he likes to operate. And so I think that, I'm like getting to the super root of it. For me, it's more like he doesn't understand that part of me where I'm like, 'cause he can't. And I try to explain it like, this I've been through.

Yeah, I mean I think that we, 'cause we definitely have a system down. Even when I'm upset, he'll—We'll talk it out, then sometimes he says, "Sorry," if it's something that upset me or not, or sometimes I'll say, "I'm sorry," if it's something that I did to upset him, but I'm not apparently as good at that. I didn't realize it until he pointed it out, 'cause I always thought I'd be way better at saying I'm sorry...I think in my head I mean it but it doesn't verbally come out.

CS's partner is able to care for her and her needs without a full understanding or being in agreement with her. She recalled a time when she and her partner had differing views about Christmas, but were able to come to a solution because Adam remained

engaged: "He's very, very, very logical and so he did not get it at first, but basically, I don't know if he just gave in. I think he just gave in. It was like, "Okay, well if it's really that important to you then we'll just celebrate Christmas." And so progressively every single year Christmas has gotten way more extravagant."

He Tries to Understand What Is Behind My Anger

When in arguments with her partner, CS mentioned that her partner sometimes "takes cues [so he can] just do what he thinks would make me happy." CS spoke about her current partner as able to check how she is feeling, rather than operate based on the belief that she is angry with him:

So sometimes he thinks that I'm angry when I'm not angry and I'm sad, but apparently I have similar faces, and I told him that it's not okay for him to assume that I'm angry when I'm not angry. And then at first he was like, "Well, you look angry." But then he realized [what I was trying to say.] "Okay, but that's not what you really meant, so it's kind of my bad to react to the fact that I think you're angry when you're not, so I need to do a better job of asking you what's really going on." He doesn't really necessarily ask, but he just kind of now assumes that I'm not angry, which is great, unless I verbally tell him, "I am angry and this is what's going on." But he'll take cues to just do what he thinks that would make me happy by asking me what would actually make me happy.

CS also spoke about her and her partner taking breaks in order to be emotionally able to take this step back and get attuned to each other.

I guess for fights sometimes how they will escalate is that he'll be angry, or no, I'll be angry. He'll take something that I say and then he'll take it the wrong way, and then I take that as like I'm not understood. And so I feel like I'm misunderstood because I'm like, "You don't understand me." And then he'll take that as like, "What?" And I'll say something in defense 'cause then I'm scared that we're just gonna live this life that's not as emotional, and then he'll be like, he'll put up his defenses, and then because he puts up his defenses and I'll put up my defenses, and then we'll take a small break. Usually we try not to go to bed angry or anything like that, but like I'll go to a different room. I'll shut the door or something like that. He'll have time to relax. He'll calm down. Sometimes I do calm down, sometimes I don't, and he'll just come back in and be like and tell me, "You know, I was wrong," or "What can we do? Should we

do this? Should we go to therapy? What can I do to help?" And then that usually makes it's own like, "Oh, okay." Like, "Yeah, let's try something."

My Relationship with Him Has Helped Me to Heal

In the interviews, CS attributed much of her healing to her current partner's responsiveness to her.

We do fight, but he kind of has given me the resolutions, and the sorrys, and we've come to an agreement that I've always wished that I would have with my parents.

CS talked about her relationship with her current partner in comparison with her relationship with her parents, and noted the ways in which her relationship with her partner is different.

With me and Adam, it's more equal, and I don't have to—I don't feel like I have to fight for that power.

The theme “me relationships with him has helped me to heal” also came up in the context of the death of her ex-boyfriend, and how her current boyfriend helped her to cope with and heal from that by redirecting her back to the present:

We've talked about how to get me out of it [regressed episodes], because...especially when my ex died, I would regress back to how I was when I was in a relationship with him. I just felt all of the—I just felt like I was abused again. I felt like I was hurt again, and then I don't know. It was just—I don't know how to explain it. I regressed back to how I was in the relationship, and I was dealing with his death, and I think I guess it's natural when someone dies. You reflect, and memories pop up, and so all the feelings came back, so I was—plus the death situation. I was a mess, and so he had to—We have this whole system where he has to be like, “Okay, you are 31 years old. You are with me. The year is 2019. You teach yoga. You are trying to pursue your education. This is what happened today. This is what time it is. This is what happened yesterday, and this is what happens tomorrow.” He has to walk me through the entire thing for me to get out of that spot.

He Makes Me Feel Safe

CS also mentioned her relationship with her partner making her feel safe.

I think something that I didn't get in my previous relationships is the ability to just feel safe. I don't worry about him doing something to hurt me, and if he does do something that does end up hurting me, it's never intentional.

When speaking about her previous romantic relationships, CS told a story of "horrible" men who physically, verbally, and psychologically abused her. Her current partner, however, proved to her that that was not his intention by showing her safety, security, and kindness.

Adam and I are just more affectionate, and it's never been like you are evil human. It's more just consistent...It's very reciprocal, it's very giving.

We Are a Good Match

CS observed that there are moments when she and her partner are able to get along just because their personalities and tendencies are compatible: "And then we kinda just snap back to being happy again."

It seems that their personalities allowed for a level of compromise that felt natural: "Maybe it was a little bit of sacrifice, where he just decided, "Okay I can make it a little colder." And I was like, "It can be a little warmer." And then I'll go under the covers, he goes over the covers, stuff like that where we just naturally figured it out."

Personality compatibility, or, being a "good match" seems to have played a huge role in the success of their relationship: "He doesn't really hold any grudges...He understood once, and we talked about it... I understand he didn't mean to, and I don't hold that against him, so I think...with him and I don't ... We don't hold grudges, too. I don't hold that against him."

CS also spoke about her partner as believing in the relationship, and sharing similar views about arguments: "It just doesn't affect his life when he does this repression, or if we

get into a fight. It's almost like he doesn't change the way he feels about me, he just kind of accepts that's part of life and that's part of relationships, and that that's just a small fight, not the bigger picture." Overall, it appears that they have developed a deep understanding and acceptance of each other that allows the relationship not just to continue, but to flourish: "it's not like he has ever made a suggestion being like 'no, I don't, I'm tired of hearing you talk.' But I just know because he'll give me that smirk like 'okay.'"

I Have Found Ways to Heal from My Pain

Yoga Has Given Me the Tools I Need to Connect with Myself

Yoga was a way for CS to sit with her emotions and to become an "observer." CS already had a sense of what she needed in order to heal, and yoga gave her tools that she needed in order to do so.

When I really got into practicing yoga, not just the physical, but I got into practicing the idea that it's about just in that moment, instead of focusing on whatever, but focus on your breath, focus on slowing it down and focus on sensing your body, because there's a lot of body sensing that goes along with it, and acknowledging how you feel. You stay in the stillness because you're trying to—Not because it's a magical place, but in a way that it forces you to confront whatever it is that you're feeling, because it's like, through boredom, then—Whatever you're trying to suppress is going to slowly come you, and it's almost like you have to be with yourself, and so that has created—Doing that consistently over, and over, and over, and over again, and practicing the fact that you can't live with—You're not—You're in this space that's safe, that you can't use any defenses, and don't get me wrong.

Even when I teach, or even when I take, I see when you give them stuff. You don't do anything. You just leave them alone, and sometimes students will come up, and they'll get so angry at you. You didn't do anything, and they'll scream at you. They'll cuss at you, and you're like, I didn't do anything, and the same thing with me. There are moments when they just give me my space, and then all of a sudden, I just bawl. I just cry there, and that's really what I—It's just created more of these experiences for me, and then combining it with what I know about psychology, and learning more about how to—It's just being in that stillness. It's not about connecting to my chakras, or connecting to this. It's like, no, just being in stillness has allowed whatever I need to feel stay, so that I am here right now.

Since doing yoga, it's been—It's carried me through and I've made this crazy progression where Adam's like...Adam can see this huge shift. I do not know, and it's

not, again, yoga. It's the fact that it's created a space, that it has given me tools, so that it's basically when I think of it, it's giving me tools so I can stay in that stillness, and then from that, I just create these shifts. It's very much the most...It sucks. It sucks because you don't want to be there. You don't want to do it. You have to feel, but once you—It just creates that same spiritual shift. All of a sudden, something just changes.

It's been happening now consistently, so from that first one, then I started to do, again, practice yoga, and then ever since then, it's been shift, after shift, after shift, after shift. Because again, during that period, it was not great. It was hard. I did make a huge shift, and there was a huge change, but it still—Now, since developing my own practice, and just, again, it's all for—It's not physical. It's just this idea, having tools, using my breath to stay in the moment...My life has—I have found that it just teaches me something every single time, and I'm like, okay. There is something more out there, and I'm—There's just something more out there, and it's taught me to—This is the whole thing, is to be the observer, and then for I guess yoga, it's the—In yoga, it's the observer, or to just be the ego, to develop the ego strength, and that's—The whole hour is dedicated to that—Not by talking about it, but just by feeling it, and to be in silence, and to observe that ego...I love it. It's not that I need it, but it's—I can definitely tell the difference, where I just—I'm just definitely not the same person as I was before I started yoga, before I had that one experience, and just—I'm just not the same person, and my friends have seen it. It's not something where I'm covering up. I'm always really conscious of that, and I always consciously try to make sure that it isn't something I'm covering up.

Confronting and Working Through What was not Mine

Although CS did not have the best experience with a therapist at first, she spoke more highly about the progress that she is making with her current therapist:

I feel like it has made me introspective and it's made me confront things that I didn't want to confront about myself and to work through them.

CS' therapist has given CS the opportunity to safely process her trauma and suggest alternatives to the deeply rooted irrational thoughts that were instilled in her by her parents at a young age. CS began to realize that her parents' issues were separate from her own.

When I went to therapy, it just helped me realize that it wasn't my fault...I don't know what she did, but what techniques, because it was such a long time ago, but she really did help me recognize that...I don't know what she did, but she just helped me recognize that there were flaws in my thinking, because there was part of me that truly felt that it was seriously my fault, whenever anything went wrong. It was all my

fault. Someone accidentally tripped across the street, and I would, for some odd reason, I would feel a lot of guilt from it, and I don't even know who this person, and so it's taken me a while to get over whenever anything bad happens, that it's not my fault, and she challenged me. What makes you think you're so powerful that you can control that? I was like, I don't know, and so that helped a lot.

They took that energy and now they direct it towards each other, that hatred, and now that I'm like, not obviously, but now that I'm in this way more stable place in my life. I think they see me as a person that they can fight through and that I am their confidant. And so it's interesting that I feel like the roles have kind of reversed now, and I'm kind of gathering this from when I go to therapy, and he was saying that it's interesting that now I'm kind of in the parental role managing them versus them being parenting me. 'Cause they'll just—I'll talk to my dad and he's like, "Your mother said this, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And then I would talk to my mom and she was just like, "Your father did this." Which was still messed up 'cause he's still manipulating, but then she still never stops. So there's really, they're kind of—It's just a bad cycle they're going through.

Reassurance Along the Way

CS emphasized her “spiritual experiences” that she could only explain as “signs and symbols” that “things were going to be different.” She recalled several of these instances:

Basically the story was, I was going to get my GED. I hated it. I was crying through the whole entire thing because I thought I was stupid, and then I told my dad, because my dad took me, and I was like, “I’m not going to take the last test. I’m not going to do it,” and I convinced him I wasn’t going to do it. Right as he was about to take off, the song “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” came on, and I was like, “Dang it. It’s like a sign.”

A guy who would help take me when my mom would kick me out, he told me he was very religious, and he would be like, “Hey—” and I would ask him about God. He would say, “Well, sometimes we ask for signs from God expecting for clouds to part, or thunder to come down, when we don’t even realize a butterfly landed on your shoulder.” When I turned 21...I’d just been getting over a relationship, but a butterfly landed on my shoulder—at midnight on my birthday, my 21st birthday. I had this huge party, and there was just this yellow butterfly that circled around, came into our house, and the—Someone swat it...and I got so angry...and I was so distressed, and I was like, “Oh, my god!”...and my friend,... she took the butterfly who that was kind of down, and she just put it on my shoulder, and it stayed with me for the entire night...I walked around with a butterfly, and it was like, that moment that I knew that I can get through school. I’m not a high school dropout anymore kind of thing.

When I was younger, I saw this guy that I thought was really cute, and I creepily took a picture of him, and I remember thinking to myself, I was like, if I can get a guy like

him, then maybe I'm worth something...and then my senior, or his senior year, it would have been my junior year if I was in school, I met this really cute guy, and he asked me out, and we dated for a little bit, though I wasn't—I actually wasn't that into him...He actually is like a weird guy, but I was looking through my pictures, and then...I saw a picture of him, and he was the guy that I took a picture of, but I had no idea that was him, and so I was like, "Oh, my gosh!...I didn't go after this guy...I used to go to this coffee shop. He saw me and he sought me out. He came to the coffee shop every day because he knew I was there. I never invited him. I didn't know he was interested, but he went to the coffee shop every day to slowly make his move on me. Even though with him, he's like, I don't really like him, it was still these random signs that—I don't know.

Even when I'm just trying to get—feel okay about Peter and his death, I just walked, and then there...I saw a bunch of butterflies that came up to me, and I was like, "Okay..." Something just snapped me into just realize that there was something more, and that he wasn't necessarily gone...He was still—I don't know if—spiritually there or not, but just—It didn't feel like he was gone, and it—I think it's what you're saying, that the purpose of him, the love that we did have, and the abuse that we did have, and the specialness, regardless of everything, the specialness of what he meant to me, was still there, and it was just something where it just—I saw butterflies and it just snapped. There'll be times when I'm just really sad, and sometimes I'll just catch myself in the mirror, and I'll look at myself, and I just go back to that one memory of when I did make that change, and it's like it all came back. I'm like, "Nope. There's a change that's going to happen. I'm going to change. Things are going to be different," and it's not me talking to myself, convincing myself. It was just the acknowledgment that there was a shift in that particular moment.

MONKEY4: I BECAME MORE INTENTIONAL

I Just Kept Going

When Monkey4 spoke about life events, she described feeling as though things just were the way that they were, and that she did not really think too hard about them:

I don't think either of us really thought about it like that. It was just what it was. We never really thought of it as weird or anything other than like just day to day. I think we were just living it. We were just in it. We weren't really considering what it was or what it meant at the time. It was just kind of our life. So it didn't seem like anything unique or anything at the time. It just was normal for us. So it's interesting looking back. I definitely think of it as like, "Wow, that was pretty intense." You know what I mean? Like it is intense looking back, but at the time it didn't feel that way. I don't think at the time we really had a lot of introspection about the whole thing.

Growing up the way that she did, Monkey4 thought of her life as the norm. She felt as though this was the way her life was, and did not consider it unusual.

I think I just normalized it. It didn't feel like mistreatment. Like I said, I don't think I really considered any of it mistreatment until I had my own kids. I think for the longest time, it just was normal. It was just what was my life. And I never stopped long enough to look at it as anything other than just what it was—that it was just my life. I didn't think about it. I just kept moving forward. So I didn't look back [or] ponder my relationships with them at all. I just kept going, surviving. I just was living life. It wasn't like I thought about what it was like with them at the time. It just felt like what was normal.

But like I said, I think as kids, we just go. You just move on. You don't have a lot of time of introspection, where you're like, "I'm sad." You just kind of live, and you are. You just keep being.

Do You Care?

Monkey4 described a lonely childhood in which her mother was mostly absent.

If someone would've asked me as a kid if my mother cared, I think that would have been a hard question for me to answer like. As far as caring, yeah my basic needs were met but I definitely got the impression that her priority was usually whatever man was in her life.

She detailed a story of being left at school as a child, being unsure if she had been forgotten.

When I was in kindergarten I was supposed to get picked up at my school, and after school I was on the playground with all the other kids and we were just playing and slowly kids would get picked up by their parents or whoever...until I was the only kid left on playground and I remember watching the janitor finish his work and leave and he was like the last person in the school to leave and I was sitting on the playground waiting for someone to come pick me up and I don't think I even knew who was supposed to pick me up and I lived with my mom at the time but she was remarried to this guy so I think I just knew someone was picking me up....And it was dusk and it was getting late and eventually my mom's husband comes speeding into the parking lot to pick me up so that was kind of typical of my mom. I think there was a lot of me just waiting around or being somewhere.

Her Boyfriends and Husbands Were Her Priority

Instead, Monkey4 believed that her mother's first priority was "whatever man was in her life" at the time. Monkey4 spoke about her mother's serial monogamy, and her resulting absence.

And then she always had a relationship. So ninth grade, she had a live-in relationship, I think, for part of that. That ended, and then she had started another relationship with the guy who would become her fifth husband, but she would mostly stay at his house. So she just was never home.

During her teens, her mother moved out of the state. She remembers that her mother did not want her to come with her.

I think at 10th grade when I met him [Monkey4's husband], my mom was just meeting her fifth husband. And maybe like a year-and-a-half later when we were still dating, my mom decided to leave with her fifth husband and move out of the state. And so I was going to be basically left alone. I was involved in a big academic thing that I couldn't just leave and I don't think my mom really intended on having me go with her anyway.

She Was Always Busy with Work

Monkey4 discussed her mother's job and how it seemed to take priority over her and her brother:

The minister at the church across the street...would let me and my brother and I hang out there. So he would put on cartoons in the kitchen of the church, there was a TV in

there and we would just, after school sit there and watch movies and eat snacks whatever he would let us have and we would just wait till my mom or somebody eventually picked us up for like hours so that was pretty much like my life with my mom as a kid but so a lot of just getting Child Care from whoever was available or I don't know just hanging out alone... 'cause she worked all the time.

During her teenage years, Monkey4's mother often had to attend conventions for her job:

Ninth grade, my mom was never around. She had a job that had her working all the time, too....She was the director of convention services. Whenever there [were] conferences or conventions, she was in charge of that, so a lot of times she'd be home really late at night if there was a convention that went late. That would be through the weekends, and sometimes seven days a week. So she was really busy, and never really around.

Monkey4 and her brother would try to reach out to their mother, to get as much time from her as they could to make up for the time that they were not getting from her at home:

My mom was a hotel executive and she worked at this hotel that was at the base of a ski resort...So my brother and I would go skiing or snowboarding all day with my friends and come in to try and find my mom at work. To ask for money for food or ask for food or something like that so she [was] usually working and she usually she was good about helping us get food or money usually. So that was kind of typical but we didn't—that was the probably the most interaction we really had with her through adolescence there wasn't—If we saw her, it was usually when we went to her work to see her, we saw her at work more than we saw her at home.

I Needed More from Her

Monkey4 recounted times when she longed for her mother to care for her as an emotional being, to show some emotion in return. Instead, she was often met with coldness from her mother.

If I was sad, my mom would just be like, "I can't do anything for you, suck it up."

There might have been times where I did have resentment toward her. I feel like I acted out more angrily at her, at times, as a teenager. Yeah....And I think I, maybe, kind of, was aware that I wanted more from her. During the times when I was really difficult, and we would have some discussion that was more confrontational—just verbally. I think there [were] times that I would storm off, as a teenager, and I

wished—Somehow, part of me—I think I even remember some part of me wanting her to follow me, to actually want to make it better. But she would just walk away. She never pursued me any further than the initial discussion. She wasn't going to put any more energy into it. I think that definitely bothered me.

I Made Myself Not Need Her

Monkey4 said she fought to get to a place where it did not bother her anymore—she had to.

I think it was just lonely. I think it's just a hard thing to deal with when it's your mom—I think there's always some kind of expectation that your mother is supposed to do a lot more. And so, I definitely feel like I can remember being disappointed, and feeling that disappointment, but I just don't think I stopped long enough to really process it. It's not like I had a lot of time to really consider what it meant to me or anything like that. I remember being disappointed in her, and resentful of her, and feeling like she didn't care, and feeling like she was totally in her own world. But also at the same time thinking, I have my own life, and social life, so I don't care either. Kind of like that kind of thing. I don't need you, so whatever.

I think, at the time, I don't believe my mom was doing her best, but I don't think I cared. As far as—I didn't want—I wasn't gonna try to get more out of the relationship with her. I just think I was disappointed and resentful. But I don't think I believed that she was doing her best...I think, yeah, it affected my desire to even have much to do with my mom. It wasn't like we had a great relationship. I just didn't want—I figured she had her own thing, and I didn't care. I was like, whatever. I wasn't gonna try to make something more of it.

In order to survive, Monkey 4 said she had to lower her expectations, to suppress her feelings of disappointment and resentment.

I already, from the time I was really little, had stopped expecting emotional support from her.

I think it was 15, when I started to mature enough to where I was just kind of like, she is how she is. She's not—that she doesn't care. I think, honestly, at the time, I felt like she doesn't care about me. You know what I mean? There's not a caring about me as a person, and that's not gonna change. I think that I'd already kind of come to that understanding at 15.

My Dad Tried

He Was Disabled, So He Could Not Fully Be a Dad

Monkey4 spoke about her father in terms of the positive things that he attempted to provide for herself and her brother, despite his disability:

My dad was disabled so he tried really hard to give my brother and I normal experiences. So we would go to the beach a lot and my dad would take us—cause he couldn't, he was in a wheelchair and he couldn't take us like himself—like to the beach because of the sand and stuff so he would usually park at a beach where he could see us from wherever he parked and he would just kind of hang out in the shade at his car and my brother and I would go to the beach and that would be a kind of typical of my dad, he would try to give us a normal childhood and childhood experience, the best he could considering his disability so that was pretty typical, like even sometimes we would go to like a park or whatever, or the beach kind of but he wouldn't really be able to come out and hang out with us but that was pretty cool.

This factor, together with her father's disability, lead Money4 to view her father in a more positive light. She spoke about how it was obvious that her father was struggling, and she was more forgiving because of it.

I definitely felt like I gave my dad more of a pass growing up than my mom, because my dad had his physical disability, so it was really obvious that he was dealing with so much more right in front of us. I think that was easier....I feel like my dad was genuinely doing his best at the time....I did feel like my dad was doing his best with what he had....He had his own challenges specifically because he was disabled and there was a lot of issues that he had.

He Made Sure I Was Safe

Although unconventional, the way that Monkey4's father parented was perceived by Monkey4 as positive. She appreciated that her father cared about her safety:

I had friends and we...would want to be teenagers and go drink or party or something and instead of my dad not knowing where we were, or looking for me, he would rather like us be somewhere safe doing that. So I can think of a couple times when my dad bought us cheap wine and took my friends and I to the beach and again just kind of hung out and did his own thing but made sure that we were safe and he knew where we were.

I Knew My Dad Cared

Monkey4 had positive experiences with her father. She spoke about how she knew he loved her because of his actions.

As a kid I felt like my relationship with my dad, there was more of like a nurturing connection, like I always felt like my dad loved me you know... like he spent a lot of time talking to me and like I said there was no doubt in my mind that my dad cared.

Monkey4 talked about the comfort that it brought her knowing that her dad cared about her.

But at least feeling like, at the end of the day, if I had to think that somebody cared in the world, I did believe my dad cared. He wasn't around, we didn't live near him or anything. It was more like a long distance caring. But I did feel like he did care. And what he could do, he would do. And he even cared about me from an emotional standpoint. Like if I was sad, my dad cared...my dad, if I was sad, my dad would want to know what was ... Tell me about it. He actually was invested in me as an emotional person. So, I think I at least felt ... There was something about having my dad care that made me feel at least better about ... There was somebody on the planet that cared, at that level.

He Did A Better Job Than My Mom

When speaking about her father, Monkey4 often compared her experiences to those she had with her mother. It seemed that she appreciated her father's actions more because she was able to contrast those actions to the lack of action from her mother.

I think as a kid I felt that relationship was probably better because in comparison to my relationship with my mother that felt very sad and I didn't feel connected to her. My dad I did feel connected to.

To have a positive, more typical relationship with a parent meant a lot to Monkey4. She spoke about perceiving his consistent parenting as love and caring, and juxtaposed this to the fact that her mother did not show an interest in putting effort into the parenting.

Whereas my dad would have hours and hours of lecturing, and even if I felt like I was over the lecture, I think there was a part of me that felt cared for because of the time he took, which is what my mom didn't do.

Monkey4 felt that the root of the problems between herself and her mother was the fact that her mother prioritized her romantic relationships over her children. She speculated that the reason she perceives the relationship between herself and her father to be so much more positive is because her father did not have this problem.

And my dad for most of my life for pretty much my entire childhood was single and I never knew him to be involved with another woman so as a kid I feel like my relationship with my dad was better.

I Found Ways to Survive

Monkey4 recognized that in order to survive, she would have to be an adult herself. She had to go into survival mode:

I can remember being four and realizing that my mom was not going to help me emotionally...And so, I think it was survival. I honestly think, sometimes, that part of that inner having to take care of myself, that being able to be more intuitive for myself was because there was nobody doing it for me. Because I knew that nobody else was there to be that for me. I had to....It was almost like this...When I think about...I hope it's not too deep, but that whole idea of neuroplasticity, when part of your brain stops working, then something else takes over? It was almost like some kind of evolutionary survival. It was like, okay, if no one else is considering what's best for you, you have to. You have to start being a little more aware than the average kid. Because I remember being on high alert from the time I was super little. Just knowing who was safe, and who wasn't...Just because I felt like nobody was really paying attention a lot of times.

I Did What I Could to Feel Normal

She wanted more than anything to feel “normal.” She spoke about “normalizing” her childhood, and trying her best to feel less like she was different.

My actual experience with them was more or less just trying really hard to continue to normalize it. The dysfunctional aspects of it. Of the relationship with them. Just trying to make it as not dysfunctional as possible. That was kind of most of my childhood. Trying to feel normal.

I remember wanting to seem normal. I mean, I didn't think about it too much consciously, but I remember telling people that I had a midnight curfew because I didn't want to seem like nobody cared, and no one was home. So I pretended that I had a curfew, even though I didn't have a curfew....The one guy that I was kind of dating more socially had a car and stuff, and I remember being like, "Oh, yeah. I have to be home at midnight." Just to normalize my life. So I think, obviously, I was trying to....Somewhere I realized some of my life wasn't normal, so I was trying really hard to make it normal. But because I was focused so much ... I think, maybe, before I got my own social life in 7th grade and stuff, there may have been times when I was sad, and I really missed my parents.

Their Gifts Meant a Lot to Me

Since Money4's parents were not always there for her in the ways that she needed them to be, she saw their gifts as little tokens of their affection. She cherished these small gifts because often times, it was the most that she could get from her parents in terms of reassurance that she mattered.

They would send us gifts sometimes. And I would just—I don't know, like cherish whatever gift it was. It could be something super small. But it had more meaning because it was all I had as far as connection with them. So somewhere in there, I might have been sad.

Monkey4 discussed how the gifts that she received from her parents “had more meaning than just being something.” She mentioned these types of memories with both her mother and father.

She was in southern California, so she went over the border or something. And one was this leather wallet with a horse on it. And it said Mexico, or something. But I remember thinking it was super cool.

Monkey4 recounted a gift of foodstuffs that she never ended up eating because it had such a significant meaning for her:

I remember he sent me these chocolate covered almonds. And it was so weird. it's probably not the most meaningful, it's just one of the most ... Memories I have, like stick in my mind. I didn't want to eat them, so the chocolate turned white, because I had them so long. Because I was afraid of eating them all, then they'd be gone. I don't know, I must have ... And at the time, I didn't think of it as representative of my

relationship with him, or the fact ... It just felt like ... I don't know. It seemed like this thing from my dad and it was all I had, so I didn't want to eat them all. And they turned white.

My Church Family Was There for Me

In the absence of her biological parents, Monkey4 found a new extended family with her church. They provided things that her parents could not at the time, and often acted as a home when her parents were not available to her.

It was very much like when I was a kid, I felt very supported. There was a lot of really nice people who... Like I said, my parents would drop us off at church, they wouldn't even go in, but those people were not judgmental of us being kids whose parents weren't around, but they were very supportive and nice people. So I always felt ... Yeah, very accepted.

My Faith Helped Me to Heal

Money4 connected with the positive aspects of Christianity and saw the value of these aspects.

There's something very wholesome and nurturing in getting into the loving and supportive aspects of the Christian faith. And I think I always connected with those aspects of it, rather than the judgment side of things.

Some of these types of values of Christianity resonated with Monkey4, and helped her to view herself in a different light.

I think there's also messages in there about, you are good. You are loved. You are good. So not connecting with even the worst parts of myself, but just looking for and recognizing the goodness in myself, if it was harder to find growing up, because those weren't necessarily the big messages that I was getting. So that also helped.

My Faith Guided Me in My Relationship

Monkey4 also recognized that her faith in the Christian religion helped her in her relationship with her husband, who was also instrumental in her healing.

I think that that helped, because there's a lot of forgiveness, and there's a lot of commitment, and a lot of the supportive aspects of faith, I think really did help me to

connect with those things, which helped with our relationship. Because the focus was on finding the best and getting through hard times, as opposed to more ... Judgment or those kind of aspects of it. So I think that probably played a big part too, is that I connected with those values early on. About being somebody who's forgiving and wanting to be committed, and being a caring, loving person, who looks for the best in people. So I think that probably had a lot to do with it early on too.

The self-reflection that Monkey4 was able to do also helped her to build insight into her intentions in her relationship, which gave her clarity and peace of mind.

But definitely in the concept of learning about prayer, and just that began a lot of my own introspection. If I hadn't learned, that's kind of a teaching of—Being able to have moments of self-reflection through that, was very healthy for me growing up. So I think that also contributed to me figuring out what am I doing? What are my motivations? What do I really want out of this relationship? Kind of that self-evaluation in a positive way, was helpful.

My Husband Became My Family

Monkey4 eventually found a healthy and fulfilling family with her husband.

Even though my husband isn't blood family, I feel equally connected to him like that...I feel like with my blood relatives, nothing can separate that relationship. They're always gonna be family...in the same way, my husband, even though we're not ... He's not a relative in that sense, but I feel like he is family just the same... No matter what went on between us, I still feel like he would always be family, in that sense. And I think he feels the same way.

We Only Had Each Other

Since Monkey4's parents had abandoned her and left her on her own from such a young age, and her husband was in a similar situation at the time, the two of them leaned on each other for support.

He had been living with his sister and she moved somewhat around the same time my mom moved so we both kind of were in this transitional period about where we were living and he was still really young too. He was like 20 and I think I would've been like 16.

Monkey4 believes this could have contributed to the close familial bond that they built and still share.

From the time we started dating, it definitely felt more like serious from the beginning...I think it's because neither of us really had anywhere else to go. And I know that sounds so sad in a weird way, but it's not like—I think if I had this really super supportive family, and I was having this dysfunctional relationship that felt like, this relationship's making me feel sad because this person's in and out. And I had this supportive family to go to, it might not have—I might not have stayed in this relationship. But I had nowhere to go. And he had nowhere to go. We both didn't have families that were intact or supportive. It was sort of like, whatever was going on, we were all that we had. It sounds so tragically sad when I say it like that. But it's like that's kind of, I think, what kept us going is, if we didn't work through this, where were we gonna go? It wasn't like there was much of an alternative at the time. It was like—And obviously, completely different lives, did not feel better than working through whatever challenges we had. The challenges seemed workable still.

Monkey4 stated that she felt as though, because of their circumstances, their relationship seemed much more serious.

We just did have each other. It wasn't traditional dating relationship at all. Sometimes it felt a little bit more like we had each other, it was like survival.

He Took Care of Me

Monkey4 recognized that the circumstances that her and her husband were in led them to depend on each other in many ways.

I ended up really depending on him for just everything. At that point we ended up living together at his family's ranch and I continued to go to school and he worked. He was already graduated from high school...but he basically supported me, so we became very much like kind of—I was definitely dependent on him in a lot of ways. It didn't feel like that. I mean it's not like he ever held it against me. I think that experience with his family—something like that. So we were both pretty young trying to figure it out. We ended up sort of living with each other and depending on each other for a lot of stuff. For me, definitely depending on him more financially in that way. I don't know what he would have depended on me for other than just like, support, that kind of stuff. But that would have been really a big influence on our relationship from early on. We both had really dysfunctional family. So I think having each other to kind of weather our dysfunctional families was really helpful. I was there for a lot of encouraging him to kind of see more clearly how dysfunctional

his family was, which took some time for him to kind of realize that they weren't healthy for him.

Monkey4 speculated that her husband having to take on a breadwinner/caretaker role from such a young age helped him to cope with his family leaving him behind:

I think it helped give him purpose too because even though he wasn't really a kid. You're still in that transitional, very young adult place where I don't think he knew what he was supposed to be doing. Like when his family left and stuff. I think it was good for him too to have me there just because it was a weird, difficult time for him to just sort of ... In some ways being left behind by his family also.

I Took Care of Him

Monkey4 discussed her husband's mental illness and how it affected their relationship. She stated "the journey of him getting treatment for his illness has been huge on us because it's definitely tested our relationship and that commitment to one another. Just added probably layers of challenge that most couples don't experience." Monkey4 discussed some of these challenge in more detail: "when he has been unwell it manifests where he can become somewhat delusional in that he starts to think that whatever I'm doing is sort of against him. Those times were really hard for him to look at me as sort of an adversary when I'm like the only person who was really his advocate."

When his illness was really obvious that made things incredibly hard just because he was—I mean really, it's short. He was just a jerk. But it was his illness causing those symptoms. From my perspective, he was very difficult to be around. He was moody a lot. The moody, I mean, always irritable and agitated and it just felt like—Nothing felt rational as far as I couldn't relate or try to make things better when he was really sick because it wasn't rational.

She considered how some of the difficulties were amplified because of the parallel processes that were occurring with her husband and her mother. Some of her husband's actions were reminiscent of her mother's and it added an extra layer of complexity and hurt to their conflicts.

Early on, in our dating, there were times where I think I was unsure about where my husband was at. This was before we were married, even. I think, just early dating, I wasn't clear on his level of commitment to our relationship. And just because in hindsight I see now a lot of that was his illness, before it was treated. It was just that he seemed so...kind of one foot into the relationship and then one foot in his other part of his life. He seemed unsure about where we were going. Emotionally, just sort of like in and out of our relationship. But I think, when I look back now, a lot of that was just his illness, still untreated. And he was just... What I would have attributed similarly to my mother's self-centered, "I'm just doing my own thing, and you can just go on with your life. And then when I come back in ..." Where my mom would kind of come and out of my life, so she was involved, and then she just doing her own thing. I think there was times early on where I felt my husband had similar type--like totally doing his own solo thing, and then coming back in to the relationship. And then solo.

And I was feeling unsure of what his level of commitment was. So that maybe was similar early on. But I think, like I said, after time and his treatment, and then years and years of--We have kids. And clearly, he's not going anywhere. That definitely resolved. I think early on it was more of, that could have been similar....I think for me, it was really traumatizing. I think way more traumatizing than it was with my mom. I think I cared a lot more that my boyfriend was, one minute, I felt like we were good, and then the next minute, he was gone. I think that was more emotionally challenging for me, because I was just like—I felt it more real than with my mom being present in my life and then not present. It was sort of like I already, from the time I was really little, had stopped expecting emotional support from her. But it was really hard in my relationship to feel like, oh, I'm connected with this person, and then, now I'm not, because he's in his own world....So that was definitely much harder. And I felt that painfully. And I remember fighting with him about, what's going on? And it was more confusing. And I think it was confusing because he was confused. I was like, "What are you doing?" He's like, "I don't know." But like I said, I don't think he understood what was going on with his own illness, and his own moods. So it was all confusing all around. In our relationship, probably him and his own life. And everything was kind of just confusing.

She also spoke about how she attempted to care for him during times when her husband was struggling.

It involved me learning a lot about his illness and doing what I could to help educate him about his illness and just being consistent over time. Showing him that for him to have to learn that no matter what he was thinking and feeling that reality and like what I was actually doing was very different. So it's taken years for him to realize that I'm very trustworthy, I am his advocate and that he can actually trust me more than his own feelings and thoughts.

Monkey4 also discussed the journey of self-diagnosis that she and her husband went through in order to sort out his mental illness.

One of the things that I thought was going on with my husband early on was that ...because he would smoke pot now and then. I thought his mood shifts were related to smoking pot. We would have these arguments about why he was being moody, or being difficult, or snappy. And I always thought it was because he smoked pot. For the first couple years, it was this whole discussion about how he shouldn't be smoking pot. We thought that was the big thing. He would slowly try to stop smoking pot. And then slip up now and then. So it was kind of like a couple years of on and off of that. We thought that was the problem. And then he would have a good year or something, and not do anything. Everything seemed fine. But then, when he totally stopped smoking pot altogether, stopped drinking, and then his moods were still being weird, that's when...I don't know, we kind of tried to figure out what else was going on. So a lot of that back and forth was trying to figure out...And I think it's because we both knew there were times when he was so normal, and so nice, that the times he wasn't, it didn't make sense to us. So we were always trying to find a reason. And eventually we found the reason being that he had bipolar disorder. I think that was part of us trying to work it out, was just trying to figure out, why are you so inconsistent? What's going on? It always felt like we always had something that we were trying to figure out what it was. And then, when we finally figured out what it was, then it was just working through that. His illness became a journey of figuring out what the best treatment was.

It seemed that the difficulties were, at times, almost too much to cope with. But through her husband's self-reflection, Monkey4's care, and mental health treatment, they reached a breakthrough:

having him be so adversarial and not really seeing clearly, what I was doing or who I was, it was really hard. But when he switched to Depakote, I remember one of the things he said about like a week after the medication change was, "I can see that you have feelings now." And I was like, well that makes sense. And says a lot about how things had been going previously because he just was so unstable. He couldn't quite see reality for what it was. It was really good for both of us when that medication change happened because we couldn't have kept going on with him being so unstable

We Are Very Committed to One Another

She discussed how she perceives her husband as “somebody that [she can] definitely count on [as not] going anywhere. I mean, because I don't think there was even a thought of either of us going anywhere. I think we were really both very committed in that sense.”

She also discussed this commitment in terms of her husband's mental illness:

Because of my husband's illness, I am challenged to be my best to get to make the most of our relationship too because he has bipolar disorder and so there's times that I really have to be, I'm trying to think like, I dunno just be my best to really be intentional with what I'm doing in that relationship to get the best outcome because I know that he's at times not the healthiest so somebody has to kind of you know make sure that we're going in the right direction I have to be really intentional with understanding you know where is where he's at and everything like that too kind of ensure that you know things stay healthy.

Monkey4 also recognized that the children that she and her husband share played a role in keeping their relationship committed.

There was nothing that could change other than what was going on with him. So that was so difficult that, I think, had we not had kids and this other layer of commitment and having to think about them. I don't remember thinking like, “Oh, I would leave.” I just wonder if it ever would have gotten...if before, we could kind of see the light at the end of the tunnel with his treatment. I wonder if it was just him and I, if either of us, even him being sick might've just been—because I think a lot of times he wasn't thinking clearly.

We have two kids, which I think that experience has really contributed to us having to really consider what goes on between us isn't just between us. Taking into account that our relationship and our lives and how we handle things directly affect two other people, our kids. So I think that's played a big part in what our relationship looks like.

He is Different from My Parents. Monkey4 addressed the level of commitment that she and her husband share in their relationship and how much that has meant to her over the years, especially in contrast to her parents' lack of commitment.

What I think, ultimately, the thing that was interesting was, he wouldn't really go anywhere. It's not like he ever just—Even with things were weird between us, it's not like he'd ever end it between us. So we still carried on and worked through whatever

challenge was right in front of us. But the relationship never ended. It's not like he took off and... He wasn't getting married to someone else and moving to a different state. He was always still—He still wanted to be involved, even if a 100% of the emotional involvement wasn't there, or wasn't able to be there, which is obviously what I wanted. He was still physically there. So that kind of persisted. Until we worked through it, eventually.

think just the fact that he and I have stayed together, there's no—He hasn't left. There's no—Nothing has been similar patterns to my parents. And anything that may have appeared like a similar pattern was resolved because it didn't play itself out the same way. Because there is this longevity in our relationship. There has been this continuity, which I never had with my parents, because they were so inconsistent. And because they were so, sort of, transient in my life, off and on. And there's nothing transient about my relationship with my husband. It's been so continuous, and so committed. Yeah. I think, if anything, if I had any concerns about similarities, just the time that we've been together has resolved any of those, maybe, assumptions from early on. That if—Yeah, just time has cleared all that up, for sure. Anything that could have been, oh, maybe this won't work out, or whatever.

Our Relationship Is Really Stable

Monkey4 discussed the stability that she and her husband have established and maintained throughout their relationship. She mentioned how the two of them are “not highly emotional communicators,” which allows them to enjoy a “smoother relationship.” Monkey4 speculated that this stability has allowed them to “grow to a place that is more secure and well-established.” She also mentioned the length of their relationship contributing to their overall stability.

We have been together officially, sort of dating in 1994, so a very long time and we've been married for over 20 years now...maybe that's why I say mature, or even just the fact that we've worked out a lot of kinks between us over so long...he's gotten healthier and he manages the illness really well and in kind of a reversed way where we kind of we started with more challenges and now our relationship is more nurturing and I anticipate it only seems to be going more and more where it becomes more nurturing as far as to me you know what I feel like you know harmonious, I guess that's the word, between us I feel like it only gets more harmonious and more connected and stronger as far as our, as two people, our relationship.

Monkey4 recognized and acknowledged the magnitude of the stability that her husband has offered her, and how much it has meant to her.

So that was huge as far as really offering him the kind of stability that we both needed for us to have a healthy relationship and move forward even with the challenge of his illness.

Maturity is another factor that Monkey4 attributes their stability to.

I think we interact in a way that I would describe as mature....If someone is hurt or upset, we'd be more likely to verbalize that than we would be with others around. We would hold onto that until we were alone.

It Is Give and Take

The reciprocity that Monkey4 and her husband share has also contributed to the familial bond that they share,

It's not just me giving out like on that first part of that is me putting out you know this effort but it also is nurturing and I get a lot out of it, I think that's probably the most significant thing is it's very two ways. There's a sense of balance I was want to say symbiosis....With my husband, I feel like it's not just like the best I can get it just feels like a really nice, like genuinely mutually beneficial, healthy, balanced relationship...with my husband I feel like tis mutually beneficial I get back as much as I do so I feel like it's balanced and it's healthy and I feel for as much as the energy and effort that I have to put into my relationship with my husband I get back the same amount so I mean as far as it's like it feeds into my life in a way that I get what I put it in you know what I mean, like it I don't know I'm not measuring it but you know, it's something that I'm getting something out of.

He's Very Receptive to My Needs. The open communication that Monkey4 and her husband share has also played a role in their relationship's success.

But also, being able to recognize what I'd been missing in the parts of my life that I really want and need in a relationship, have helped me to verbalize to him in more recent years, what my needs are emotionally, and what I want in a relationship. And so, he's been able to really hear what I have had to say, and then meet those needs...just being really aware of what I want now, and what I haven't had, I've been able to communicate that really clearly to him. And so, he knows what it is that I want, and what I need. So he's been able to easily meet those needs. Because there's no confusion. That's been really helpful for both of us, because then I get what I need, and it makes it really easy on him.

I Try to Make the Best of It

I accept my relationship with my parents 'cause I think this is the best I can get but I don't know if I could say that it's balanced or ideal, I mean ideal based on the circumstances.

My Parents Are Still Difficult

Money4 discussed how her changing relationship with her parents affect her. Where she once turned to them for connection, they are now reaching out to connect with her. The role reversal is bittersweet.

I think that with my parents I feel like it saps me more of my energy. I don't know if that makes sense, like I feel like that's the first thing that comes to mind is that it takes a lot more effort and it's hard for me to say because I do feel like, in a sense, I'm happy or satisfied or I'm not expecting more from my relationship with my parents or anything like that but I feel like almost like it takes more from me and I can't say that it gives back equally.

Neither of my parents are married anymore so they're both alone and they're completely dependent on my brothers and I for their, to keep them feeling loved and socialized which is so different from my childhood because they had much more of their own of their personal lives.

My Mom Wants to Spend Time with Me Now. Monkey4 talked about the challenges posed by her mother's desire to spend time with her and her family.

And unlike most of my childhood she now is the one who always wants to spend time with me and my family, like her grandkids and I think she's the one who has more free time and wishes we had time, you know more time to spend with her and so that's reverse in that sense where you know she was always too busy for us but now she has lots of time and...my family is busy...she lives in the mainland and will just let me know when she's planning on coming to visit she doesn't ask you to...tells me when she's coming to visit...she'll visit from the mainland and then she's really good for a couple of days we do...some kind of touristy thing. And then she usually gets a little more difficult to deal with by like the fifth day I think, so she's good for just under a week of a visit.

She's very similar in her kind of manipulative, last time she was visiting was in November and she made this big deal about how she couldn't, she wasn't going to visit again because it was so hard for her to travel and she's so old and this was too

challenging and so this may be the last time she's coming over here and so it was like oh that sounds awful, my kids and I felt like all know so sad that Grandma is too old to travel and visit us and then about two weeks ago she called me to tell me that she was coming in May to visit for my daughter's graduation which I thought was so interesting because she suddenly was like healthy enough to just come without even saying anything.

My Dad Wants to Be Taken Care of. In her father's old age, Monkey4 recognizes that her father longs to be cared for physically and emotionally. Her changing relationship with him poses challenges as well.

He also will just kind of call me more when he needs stuff and I know once I'm there he'll usually get me to his place just cause he needs something but then when I'm there, he likes visiting for sure because he's lonely.

He will be sort of manipulative to engage my attention so like he'll send me a text message the other night saying "what are you doing tomorrow" or "what are your plans this week" and then he'll say like "cuz I'm just really sick and I haven't been feeling well" and just kind of throwing it out there that he's not doing well....Recently in the middle of the night around 8:30 he was saying he wasn't feeling good he really needed my help so I went up to his house which is like 30 minutes away from my house and he really wasn't sick but he just want to have a conversation so I had to so let him know that it was late and I couldn't talk to him and that it wasn't a good time so he was kind of upset and so...I get the impression that he's it's hard for him to be alone but the reality is that my life is really busy and it's not a reflection of how much I love him but I think that's how he interprets some of it somewhere.

I've Used My Relationship with My Parents to Grow as a Person

Despite the adversarial experiences Monkey4 has had to overcome, she recognizes that she has done a lot of growing and learning throughout it all. She spoke about her relationships with her parents and how she has had to make the most out of what she has:

I guess my relationship with my parents is the most meaningful to me in that it really stretches my ability to be my best and to get along with them as much as possible I mean my goal is still to have a wonderful relationship as I can, they're both older and not in the greatest health and so my goal is just so that I can you know can look back without regrets and know that I did the best I could like you know with what I had and how challenging they are. So yeah I think it yeah challenges and stretches me as a person to really have to make the most of you know what I have with them.

She also recognized how she has had to set boundaries with her mother in order to maintain a healthy relationship with her.

When I think about my childhood it feels like it was tragic, you know I feel like it was a really sad tragic relationship as a kid that has become something much more mature and like cordial and I think is as good a relationship as I could have with her because I've had to really kind of like develop good boundaries.

She has also recognized that she is constantly learning and growing in order to ensure a positive relationship with her father:

As I've gotten older and my dad has gotten older, as an adult it's more challenging I think that our roles have changed and he's not kind of the dad trying to take care of me anymore and it's almost where it's like he's needing to be taken care of that's kind of complicated things and in a similar way I'm having to really understand how to navigate and have a successful relationship with my dad because he so challenging so in a lot of ways.

Monkey4 discussed some of the ways in which the effects of her relationships with her parents had allowed her to prosper in other aspects of her life:

I think my relationship with my parents helped me to weather a lot of the hard times in my marriage early on with his illness. My husband's illness. Because a lot of that was me being alone and me not having somebody who cared about me emotionally, because he was so self-absorbed in his own illness. And just having—The illness itself wouldn't allow him to focus on anyone but himself. And then, just him having so many of his own issues. Because I was already the kind of person who could totally independent, even emotionally independent, I think that helped me to get through some of the harder years like that.

But also, being able to recognize what I'd been missing in the parts of my life that I really want and need in a relationship, have helped me to verbalize to him in more recent years, what my needs are emotionally, and what I want in a relationship.

I Learned from Their Mistakes. Money4 discussed how she often watched others' behaviors and learned from others' mistakes.

And all the things feel good. All those things feel like you're going the right direction. So you kind of get confirmation like, yeah, this is where things go. I definitely felt like...As opposed to I had friends who were using substances more or...Even my brother had a really bad addiction. The choices I was making, and the direction I was

going felt very healthy. It felt like confirmation I was going the right direction as opposed to just numbing my life with something negative....It feels right. It feels right, for sure. Yeah. Yeah, making good decisions sometimes ...It's not immediate gratification, but you sense that the outcome of—I got the idea that even if it was harder to work through tough times, I could sense the outcome was going to be beneficial. And after enough good decisions, and learning that I liked what it felt like on the other end of it, I just continued to make good decisions. Because I watched enough bad decisions being made that I was like, no. It doesn't work out well like that.

More specifically, she recognized that she saw the negative aspects and outcome of her parents' behaviors, and either unconsciously or intentionally made sure to move in the opposite direction:

In the fact that my mother was married five times, and yet, I've been with the same person since I was 15. So obviously, unconsciously counter identified to a lot of my parents behavior. Both my parents have—Well, my dad had sort of an obvious criminal background at times. And just more questionable ethics. Whereas I always have felt very clear ethical guidelines for my life. I'm going to keep things above board, and be honest, and an upstanding member of society... I've counter identified with my parents. Not consciously doing it, but just always feeling like—Even as a kid, it never felt like I really related....I remember thinking a little bit out of touch with the way that my parents and family members thought. Just feeling like I couldn't relate to their thinking. So I guess that makes sense.

Watching my parents live in the moment, and live for...for whatever that was in that moment, living for their immediate gratification, I recognized didn't have a good payoff. It doesn't work out well. You end up having to deal with the consequences of those decisions eventually. And those aren't necessarily fun. So I definitely became somebody who was far more thoughtful about the decisions I made, and what that was going to look like. Because my mom is somebody who says all the time, "I leap and then I look. So I just do, and then I'll deal with the consequences." And I'm very much the opposite. And very much like, let me ponder this decision, and all the possible outcomes, and then I will make the best decision possible. So, yeah, I definitely felt like I had some vicarious learning by just watching.

Therapy Has Helped Me Gain Better Perspective

Monkey4 spoke about the mental health treatment that she has received over the years, and how it has helped her to sort out some of the guilt and shame that she had been

instilled with throughout her life. This processing of trauma and emotions has led some of her other mental health symptoms to fade to the background:

I think as a kid, I felt the sense of my loneliness in a different way. I felt very much isolated from all people as a kid. I think I felt that I owned, like I embodied whatever dysfunction existed. Like somehow—I don't know. I don't know how to explain it, except I felt like I embodied or held onto whatever the damaged part of my life was, and felt bad about it. I think that there was always some kind of underlying current or static of anxiety, because I always felt so deeply insecure because of the dysfunction that was my life as a kid. I think somehow I owned it. And now as an adult, I think I feel like I see where things belong better. And I've come to understand what is mine to own, and what is not mine to own. And a lot of that dysfunction I recognize as has nothing to do with me. And as I come across dysfunction, I know what is mine and what is not my dysfunction. And I feel a lot more secure with who I am, and knowing who I am. And being comfortable in relationships with other people, because I get where the boundaries fall between me and others. And so, I can be happy and secure with who I am, and know that I have control over that. And that if there is dysfunction or damage, or discord, it's not mine. And I can see a separation. So I feel like that feels better. I think there's a sense of ... I feel like my entire childhood was really clouded with sadness. And I think I felt sad and lonely because I wasn't sure ... I was just unclear as to what was going on. But whatever sadness was there, it was there. And I don't feel sad anymore, as who I am now. Not that to say that the dysfunction isn't ... There's still so many dysfunctional people in my life, but I just feel like I don't own it anymore, if that makes sense?

I felt like my parents both had some kind of—My dad has his own substance use issues. And even my grandmother who was around a lot when I was a kid, there was always this...there were always moody people. They were always irritated. And I feel like they were always irritated with me. A lot of people in my life—I remember even like aunts and uncles....There's a lot of people with substance abuse issues, and a lot of irritability, and a lot of people who are annoyed all the time. And I think as a kid, I always felt like other people's irritability and annoyance was my fault. Because I think those people made it seem like they were irritated at me or something I had done. So growing up, I always felt like I had done something wrong, or I had irritated somebody. So I definitely owned it. I definitely owned whatever moods people were having. I don't think that the grownups in my life were good at saying, "Oh, this is my problem. This has nothing to do with you." I think they were really big on blaming....So, yeah, it took a long time for me to realize that what other people are thinking and feeling has nothing to do with me. That's totally on them. Yeah. That was hard. I think even into being an adult, I had to carry that. I think I still work on that. But I'm better at realizing it's not my thing.

Her personal therapy has allowed her to communicate more effectively with her husband, too.

And I think a lot of that just comes from my own therapy, and then studying psychology. But just being really aware of what I want now, and what I haven't had, I've been able to communicate that really clearly to him. And so, he knows what it is that I want, and what I need. So he's been able to easily meet those needs. Because there's no confusion. That's been really helpful for both of us, because then I get what I need, and it makes it really easy on him

My Education in Psychology Helped Me Gain Better Perspective

Monkey4 discussed some of the positive effects that studying psychology, like becoming clearer, more objective, and empathetic about her parents.

I feel compassionate toward dysfunctional people who would normally be labeled dysfunctional, just recognizing that there's still so many good qualities and—I don't know. Yeah. When I think about my parents, I just think more of how it has shaped me to be more understanding toward all people in my life, I guess.

Studying psychology has helped me to understand [my mother] as a person and not my mother...taking my relationship without any expectation I would have of her out of the picture and just looking at her as a person and taking into consideration like why she is the way she is and why she behaves and has done and made the choices that she's made has helped a lot. And just me to understand the limitations and what's the best relationship I can have with her understanding you know just you know the limitations that are there based on who she is as the person and who I am and I think for the most part you know I feel good about the relationship I have with her today which I think is to me that means a lot because it's not easy you know like I said both of my parents, well my mom was married five times and probably had many more serious live-ins that weren't actually marriage relationships also the fact that you know towards the end of their lives my parents are alone it says a lot about the fact that they're very difficult individuals to just maintain long relationships.

When I think of myself as a clinician, my experience with my parents...I don't know, I think it just has given me a broader perspective on people. And how people become who they are and why they do what they do. And that people are so multi-faceted. And even though people...people can do both really good things and really bad things and be the same person. And that what people do because of who they are, in a way that affects others that they genuinely do love, is more about that person than about the people that are being hurt because of the lack of love they're getting...That some people are just dysfunctional and they've got so much going on within themselves that if they are not loving others and being the best they can in some of their other

relationships, it's not a reflection on the person who's not getting the love. It's just more indicative of the dysfunction that's going on within that person. And that people can be both good and bad. People can have many different qualities and traits. And it's hard to define somebody by one aspect of themselves. People are complicated. I guess that's—And I think going forward as a therapist and a clinician, I think that just helps me to have lived through those experiences with my parents to understand that.

Similar to her experiences in therapy, Monkey4 also discussed how her studies in psychology have led her to a better understanding of herself, and helped her to dispel some of the hurtful beliefs that she has held.

Just like I said, there's something about studying psychology that has been also therapeutic in my own life. I think just understanding others, understanding myself better. Understanding how and why people do what they do, has helped a ton. And worked out a lot of the irrational thinking that I had developed as a kid. I think I just had a lot of irrational thinking.

Analysis of Both Narratives

Similarities

There were several similarities that emerged between Monkey4 and CS' narratives. Besides the obvious similarities like their histories of child maltreatment, Monkey4 and CS both mentioned utilizing therapy and their newly acquired knowledge of psychology to understand their past and present relationships with their parents. More specifically, both Monkey4 and CS utilized their own personal therapy to sort through the guilt and shame that they had experienced in their parent-child relationships in their childhoods so intensely that they had internalized all of the blame. They both had to work in therapy to separate what actually belonged to them, and what was more of their family members' problems. In later discussions, both Monkey4 and CS pointed out that a psychodynamic orientation was the most beneficial for their healing, as their therapists were better able to get them to look "deeper" within themselves at the deep-rooted pain that they had since childhood.

Both CS and Monkey4 also discussed their psychology studies and how they have utilized their learning to understand their parents' behaviors and empathize with their parents' psychological experiences. CS spoke in terms of having to communicate and interact with her mother as if she was a therapy patient, and Monkey4 discussed having the knowledge regarding the reasons behind her parents' behaviors. Both CS and Monkey4 appear to have a reasonable conceptualization of their parents, and are able to objectively analyze their behaviors.

Both Monkey4 and CS tended to view their fathers as more supportive than their mothers. In CS' story, her mother was portrayed as the primary antagonist. Although she disclosed that her father was also psychologically and physically abusive throughout much of

her childhood, she also emphasized the moment that her father changed, and ceased his physically abusive behaviors. Although he was still manipulative, CS seemed to be able to overlook this because of the emotional support that her father provided to her during episodes of her mother's abuse. In Monkey4's case, her father was physically disabled, and was not able to be there for her in all the ways that an able-bodied father could. There were also long periods where they lived far away from one another. Despite this, Monkey4 recognized that her father did what he could. He ensured that she knew he cared about her by showing her through trips to the beach, gifts, and supervised rule-breaking. Both CS and Monkey4 may have been more forgiving of their fathers' transgressions because they were able to provide them with some of what they needed at the time. For Monkey4, her father provided emotional support; her father was someone who she knew cared for her. In CS' story, after he gave up his physically abusive behaviors, her father provided her with a teammate, someone to help her get out of the abusive situations with her mother and take her side.

In their current relationships with their parents, CS and Monkey4 discussed role-reversals. In CS' story, she spoke about her mother and father behaving in ways that lead her to have to manage their conflicts with one another. She described herself as a confidante to her parents, as they often fought "through" her. For Monkey4, the more recent experience with her parents has been one in which her mother expects her to make time for her and to treat her as a priority, and her father expects her to take care of him in his old age.

Likely as a result of these role reversals and thus, boundary crossings, Monkey4 and CS both also discussed setting and maintaining boundaries with their parents. In Monkey4's case, she talked about needing to be more direct with her father, not allowing him to monopolize her time under false pretenses like his declining health. Although Monkey4

mentioned that he is in fact sick, he also uses this in order to get her attention while he is in stable condition but lonely. In these circumstances, Monkey4 has to speak up for herself and tell her father directly that he cannot be pulling her away from her own busy life just to keep him company. This is at the risk of her father viewing her as uncaring, but because of Monkey4's growth, she is able to recognize that she can love her father while also being able to set boundaries. CS spoke about the strict boundaries that she must maintain with her mother to ensure her own mental health. Because of her mother's tendency to argue adamantly and relentlessly, CS has had to abruptly cut off communication with her mother for periods of time. CS no longer allows her mother to get away with being rude to her or others. She informs her mother that her behavior is unacceptable and reinforces this by terminating communication, or with threats of inevitable natural consequences such as losing the family members whom she is abusing.

Another obvious similarity between Monkey4 and CS' stories is their being in healthy relationships with partners to whom they are securely attached currently. Not so obvious are the similarities in the reasons why their secure attachments exist. Both CS and Monkey4 mentioned their partners in terms of the differences between those relationships and their relationships with their parents. Monkey4 emphasized that her husband has not left her as her mother did. She described her parents as inconsistent and transient, while explaining that there was a consistency and continuity in her marriage that has been a crucial factor in their relationship's success. CS spoke of how her partner is able to give her the apologies and resolution of problems that her parents never could. She also mentioned that in her current relationship, they are able to come to agreements in ways that she wished she could have had with her parents growing up. Monkey4 and CS also spoke about their relationships feeling

more equitable. CS stated that she does not feel the need to fight for power in the relationship, unlike in her parents' marriage, and Monkey4 discussed feeling as though she gets as much effort and energy out of her relationship as she puts into it. Both CS and Monkey4 also spoke about their ability to communicate their needs with their partners, and their partners' ability to take those instructions in stride. Both partners seem to make an active effort to consider the needs of CS and Monkey4 and interact in the relationship accordingly.

The Core Codes

Both Monkey4 and CS' codes speak to a self-reliance and ability to shape one's own life circumstances. CS spoke about learning to trust herself over time, making unusual but positive choices that eventually built her self-esteem, and slowly recognizing that she knows what is best for her. This trust in herself became especially pronounced after her turning-point moments; the New Year's Eve night that Peter stood her up, and when Peter died. It seems like she had a felt sense of what it was that she needed in order to thrive, and when she learned to trust in herself and her instincts, she did just that. Now, CS' core code is somewhat different in that she learned to trust herself in a way that allowed her to tap into her knowledge about herself, trusting that this knowledge was valid, and made conscious decisions that gradually changed her entire life and led her to the healthy relationship that she is currently in.

Monkey4 spoke about being more intentional in her relationships, choosing to be proactive about problems with her husband, and making sure that she is creating the best possible relationships that she can with her parents, despite their manipulative behaviors. She maintains the belief that she can improve her relationships and ensure that she has no regrets

by simply being intentional in her relationships. She also spoke about intentionality in her own personal life. For example, she discussed using her parents and other family members as an example of what not to do. Monkey4 pointed out that she has been in one committed relationship for most of her life, rather than several transient ones like her mother. She also spoke about her brother's indiscretions and how they led her to lead a more lawful life. In terms of her parents' marriage, Monkey4 explained that watching her parents live in the moment and only for themselves has taught her that she would rather be one who is more thoughtful about decision-making.

Although distinctive, both Monkey4 and CS' core codes capture a development of the self that emphasized making choices for oneself and trusting that those decisions are the best ones for themselves and can be made for the betterment of their relationships as well as other aspects of their lives. Thus, the common code between the two narratives is "I trust myself enough to know that my decisions are the best ones for me." This is the code that emulates that development of secure attachment out of insecure attachment for Monkey4 and CS.

Differences

Despite the similarities, there were also aspects of each narrative that made them unique. For example, Monkey4 and CS experienced very different types of attachment injuries growing up. Where CS experienced severe physical, verbal, and psychological abuse throughout her childhood, Monkey4 was raised by parents who were largely not there for her in the ways that she needed them to be. She was neglected by both parents, and eventually completely abandoned to fend for herself as a teenager. Monkey4 was made to choose a committed relationship in which her now husband was her primary attachment figure, which may have been an unconscious risk taken on her part to find a connection in a different type

of relationship. On the other hand, CS was raised in a household fraught with conflict and abuse.

Although both CS and Monkey4 are in healthy, securely attached relationships, the ways in which they described their relationships were very different. Looking at the relationship as a whole, Monkey4 seemed to emphasize the commitment, stability, and close familial bond that she shares with her husband. She also spoke about the effort that both parties put into the relationship to ensure the stability. Monkey4 also emphasized her husband's mental illness as well as their two children as reasons behind their level of commitment to one another. CS did not mention commitment as much as Monkey4 did. Instead, she spoke about her relationship in terms of her feeling as though it is a good match between the two of them. CS also emphasized her partner's efforts to understand her, but also how understanding is not necessary for them to be able to sort through their problems. Looking at their relationships, it seems to be intentionality versus compatibility. CS also spoke in terms of how her current relationship with her partner has helped her to heal, whereas Monkey4 talked about her relationship as more independent from her childhood trauma. This difference could come from Monkey4's romantic relationship beginning from such a young age; she and her husband grew up together beginning from their teenage years, meaning that they likely developed their identities concurrently. Further, CS had more experiences in romantic relationships, although not always the greatest, she likely learned a lot about warning signs as well as personal preferences for what she needed and wanted out of her romantic relationships.

While Monkey4 seemed to utilize her now husband as an attachment figure and her church family as a support system, perceiving them as her family, CS appeared to lean more

on herself in order to heal. Because of these factors, Monkey4 may have established a secure attachment with her husband quicker than CS did with her current partner, and CS endured several dysfunctional and abusive romantic relationships before finding her current partner. Further, although CS and Monkey4 both utilized personal therapy and psychology knowledge to heal themselves, CS also found yoga to be an enlightening and healing experience. With these differences, it is also to be considered that CS may be more in tune with herself because of the journey that she has embarked on. Although Monkey4 obviously understands herself and her needs, it seems that CS has a deeper understanding or felt sense of who she is and what she needs and does not need from others. She also has been very good with making choices that she may not have consciously known would be good for her, but were the best thing for her. It took some trial and error, but CS choosing to let Peter go, choosing to work for Abercrombie, choosing to get involved in school, choosing to start doing yoga, and choosing to become more aware of the more “spiritual” and subliminal messages that she has received throughout her life illustrate a deep trust in herself that she may not even be aware that she has just yet.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Conceptual Model of Findings

Although CS and Monkey4 both began with attachment injuries during childhood and presently have secure attachments to their romantic partners, their paths to getting there do not have much overlap. CS experienced severe physical, verbal, and psychological abuse throughout her entire childhood. This led to her a debilitating depression, as well as an alliance with her father during adolescence. CS left home and moved as far away as she could get, and began dating dysfunctional and abusive men. Her experience with her most abusive ex-boyfriend helped her to better process her relationship with her mother, and her revelations about her relationships also taught her how to trust herself more. After he stood her up at a New Year's Eve party, she hit rock bottom, and made a huge mental shift, committing to change. From then on, CS made conscious decisions that she may not have known were good for her at the time, but completely changed who she was as a person. Her self-esteem increased, she became a more social person, and she performed better in school. Among the decisions that CS made to better her life were beginning yoga, pursuing therapy, and studying psychology. Yoga has given her the insight and ability to be still, which has allowed her to confront her emotions and become more attuned to her experiences. Therapy has taught her boundaries between the self and others; she no longer carries the guilt that her parents instilled in her from a young age. Studying psychology has allowed her to better understand both herself and others. These decisions, and their results, eventually led her to her current partner and the secure attachment that they share.

In Monkey4's experience, her mother was neglectful either because she was unable or unwilling to provide the emotional support that Monkey4 needed from her. However,

Monkey shared a positive relationship with her father, who was disabled, but tried his best to provide the emotional support that she needed. Monkey4 learned from a young age that her mother would not be able to provide her with what she needed, and that if she wanted at least some of her needs met, then she would have to make the effort to achieve this. Monkey4's mother moved away while she was in high school, leaving her with the choice to stay with her boyfriend at the time. She chose to do this, and experienced a relationship with unusually high levels of commitment for people of that age. Monkey4's husband struggled with mental illness, and Monkey4 utilized her knowledge about being proactive and intentional in her life and relationships in order to overcome this obstacle together with her husband. Monkey also had children with her husband, which added another layer of commitment, and another consideration when attempting to resolve conflicts with her husband. Monkey4 pursued mental health treatment as well as psychology studies, which furthered her understanding of people, allowed her to recognize and let go of what was not hers, and confirmed that she has the power and ability to be intentional to make the best of her relationships. Despite her parents still being "difficult," she is now able to set boundaries, and to confidently say that her relationships, including her relationship with her husband, are the best that they can possibly be because she makes the choice to build them this way.

Discussion of the Findings in Relation to the Research Questions and Extant Literature

A Securely Attached Relationship

Both participants shared similar details about their current romantic relationships that appear to constitute a secure attachment to their partners. Communication between partners along with a receptivity to emotional needs was among them. Both CS and Monkey4 disclosed an open channel of communication between them and their respective partners that

allows them to discuss what they need from their partners. Moreover, both CS and Monkey4 are in relationships with individuals who are able to understand, empathize, and make changes based on the needs that are communicated with them. CS spoke about her relationship with her partner in terms of his ability to adapt and attune to her primary emotions, rather than accepting her secondary emotions. She has learned to dig deeper into the reason behind her anger, which is often fear or sadness, and these have been experiences that allowed CS to securely attach to her partner. She talked about her relationship with her partner in the context of her parents' treatment as well, stating that he engages in the problem resolution that she never experienced with her parents. She disclosed that the empathy that he has shown has allowed her to heal. CS went into more detail about the way in which her partner chooses to remain engaged with her, despite not fully understanding her point of view. She spoke about some of the confusion that he experiences when they argue, and the way that he is willing to listen and try to comprehend CS's point of view, and where her views stem from. She also discussed instances in which understanding may have been the priority for her partner, but it was not required for the two of them to come to an agreeable solution. It seems that CS's partner's ability to accept his lack of understanding of her and make genuine attempts to support her in any way possible is very significant to her. CS also discussed instances in which her partner has comforted her while she was grieving her late ex-boyfriend. She spoke about his deep empathy, sincere support, and valid efforts to help her get through that difficult time.

Both CS and Monkey also spoke about safety and security in their relationship, although in slightly different ways. Specifically, CS discussed past romantic relationships that were fraught with physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and how her current partner

treats her in a way that allows her to feel safe and comfortable in the relationship. She disclosed that because of this feeling of safety, she does not worry about her partner behaving in hurtful ways, and when he does do something that turns out to be hurtful, she recognizes that her partner did not have malicious intent. She also spoke about her relationship with her partner in terms of its simplicity or effortlessness. CS disclosed that she felt as though she and her partner fit well together, since they are both willing to sacrifice, able to forgive and forget transgressions, and view minor problems as they are, minor. Monkey4 spoke about safety in terms of stability and commitment. She disclosed a more mature, harmonious, and smooth relationship without highly emotional arguments. She attributed this largely to the amount of time that they have been together. Monkey4 also spoke about the level of commitment that she and her husband have shared over the years. She disclosed that even when their relationship was difficult, and even when they were trying to cope with his then undiagnosed mental illness and was not capable of being 100% present in the relationship, he never left her as her mother did.

CS spoke about her relationship with her current partner in terms of the lack of pettiness, and the prioritizing of the relationship over trivial arguments or personal vendettas. She disclosed that although she and her partner enjoy being “right,” they do not place being right as a priority over the relationship and will not press petty issues in order to prove their correctness at the cost of the relationship, which is in contrast to her parents’ relationship dynamics. She also mentioned herself and her partner disliking her sister’s husband, but being able to interact cordially regardless. CS disclosed that her partner, despite not being the type of person to overlook personal problems, or keep the peace at all costs, still remains respectful solely because of CS’s relationship with her sister. It appears that CS’s partner is

able to keep interpersonal relations affable for the sake of respecting CS, her relationship with her sister, and his relationship with her.

Monkey4 discussed her relationship with her husband as a familial one, viewing him as a significant attachment figure beginning in adolescence. She and her husband were both left alone by their families, almost forcing them to have to choose and rely upon one another for survival. This set the foundation for a more committed relationship, since the two only had each other to rely on at the time. Both felt as though they only had each other. This feeling of limited options led Monkey4 and her then boyfriend to care for and nurture one another in ways that family members typically would. Her husband supported her financially, which helped to give him a purpose, and she provided more emotional support.

Overall, it seems that each participant built a unique idea and sense of what a secure attachment felt like because of their early experiences with their parents. Because of these experiences, they developed a schema for insecure attachment, and thus defined secure attachment as the opposite of their parents' treatment of them. In CS's experience, she was severely abused, physically, verbally, and psychologically, by both of her parents. She experienced the same types of abuse throughout most of her romantic relationships. She collected a repertoire of these experiences, and categorized them as attachment injuries perpetrated by others to whom she was insecurely attached. Currently, she is with an individual who does not abuse her in any way, and CS identifies her attachment with her current partner as secure. As for Monkey4, her mother was emotionally neglectful, and her father, because of his disability, was physically and emotionally neglectful. Both her father and mother abandoned her at different points in her life, leaving her to raise herself while living with her boyfriend during her teenage years. She experienced this abandonment and

neglect as attachment injuries perpetrated by individuals to whom she was insecurely attached. Her current partner engages in opposing behaviors, being receptive and attuned to her emotional needs, and remaining present no matter how difficult their relationship became.

Experiencing Insecure Attachment to Primary Caregivers

Monkey4 described experiences with her mother in which she felt that she was of lesser importance than her mother's romantic partners. Her mother treated her as unimportant, which likely led Monkey4 to feel pushed aside or overlooked. When Monkey4 was 15 years old, her mother announced that she was moving to another state with her partner at the time. Monkey4 recalled feeling as though her mother never intended to have her come with her. Monkey4 disclosed feeling sad and missing her parents before she established her own social network, although it seems more likely that this sadness extended into her adolescence and maybe even her early adulthood years.

Monkey4 was also secondary to her mother's jobs; she recalled being left alone for days at a time while her mother organized and attended conventions or conferences. She also recounted her mother working until late at night, leaving her to fend for herself for dinner. Although she disclosed that she had her brother with her, one could speculate that a child would feel alone and possibly hopeless without a mother to care for their basic needs. As Monkey4 grew older, however, she was able to commute and get to her mother while she was at work. This was the primary time when Monkey4 would be able to spend time with her mother, with Monkey4 stating that she saw her mother at work more than she saw her at home. Thus, Monkey4 had to exert the effort to find transportation to her mother's work, and seek her mother out while she was working in order to interact with her mother.

Further, Monkey4 described instances in which she worried that she had been forgotten by her mother or her mother's partners. As a child, Monkey4 was forced to live a life in which she was not sure who was showing up, when they would be coming, or if she would be left with the person who was currently supervising her. Monkey4's experience with this involved waiting for hours after the school day had ended, after all the other students had been picked up, and even the school's staff were packing up to go home, for someone to come and pick her up. Monkey4 was in kindergarten at the time, unable to contact her mother, unable to ask another individual for a ride home, unable to understand how her mother could forget about her. Monkey4 also spoke about being left with church ministers, or anyone else willing to provide childcare for hours at a time while waiting for her mother to pick her up. Monkey4 may have been left in unsafe situations with unsafe people, and likely did not know whether her mother would show up to pick her up from these places.

Monkey4's mother also did not provide emotional support for her, explicitly telling Monkey4 that there was nothing she could do for her during times of sadness. She also recounted her teenage years, during which she longed for an emotional interaction with her mother. Monkey4's experience with an emotionally detached mother was one in which she felt resentment toward her. Monkey4 recounted instances during her teenage years during which she lashed out, and then walked away hoping that her mother would pursue her and make more of an effort to mend the relationship. She wished that her mother was willing and able to give her more emotional interaction than what she had been giving her. Monkey4 reported feeling disappointed by her mother's refusal to engage with her and her willingness to just walk away and leave things unresolved.

Monkey4 spoke about most of these experiences without discussing the emotions that she felt while they were occurring. This could be due to defensiveness or desensitization. The way in which Monkey4 spoke about her experiences with her mother gave the impression that she either did not give herself the opportunity to process the rejection that this entailed, or she had experienced so much of this rejection that she had become desensitized to the negative emotions that accompanied the rejection. This is consistent with Monkey4's disclosure that she had realized from early childhood that her mother would not be willing or able to provide the emotional support that she wanted and needed from her.

Although her mother was not around due to her job and her romantic partners, Monkey4's mother attempted to provide financial support for Monkey4. Monkey4 recounted occurrences during which she sought her mother out at work in order to ask her for money, and her mother was always reliable in this respect. In the manner in which Monkey4 spoke about these aspects of her relationship with her parents, it appears that she always trusted that she would be provided for financially and regarding physical sustenance.

When she spoke about her father, Monkey4 maintained a forgiving stance, stating that her father's disability kept him from being the best father that he could be. She emphasized the effort that her father put in to support her emotionally, provide parental discipline, and ensure her safety, despite not being able-bodied. She also compared her father's efforts to the lack of effort that her mother showed. Feeling as though her mother did not care for her, and living separately from her father, led Monkey4 to invent ways to feel and appear normal and securely attached to her parents. For example, Monkey4 cherished small gifts that her parents purchased for her, pretended to have a curfew, and sought out family in different arenas of life.

Monkey4 described her experience with an insecure attachment to her mother as lonely, sad, and resentful, but also reluctantly accepting, and forcibly nonchalant. She felt rejected and abandoned by her mother, and let down by her father. She made herself apathetic toward her mother's transgressions, and forgiving of her father's shortcomings. It was a childhood in which her parents were unwilling or unable to give her what she needed or wanted, and she found ways to cope with this by convincing herself that she did not need it, or that it was too much to ask for.

As for CS, the experience of insecure attachment to parents was much more chaotic, unpredictable, and volatile. She described her mother as an individual who switched between adoration and abhorrence without warning or antecedent. She described feeling confused and fearful of her mother as she told the story of her mother insisting on heavy-duty locks for her bedroom door to protect her from "the moth." CS explained the terror she felt as that same person came crashing through that locked door despite the concern that her mother had just days before. CS' mother's inconsistencies contributed to CS being unsure of which mother she was going to be interacting with: the butterfly or the moth.

Most of CS' childhood was spent in verbal and physical altercations with her mother, or in fear of verbal and physical altercations with her mother. She described instances in which her mother tried to suffocate her with blankets and with her bare hands, at the advice of her mother's "therapist." She was a child at that time, with no way to defend herself and no one to come to her aid. These were also instances that made her experience of insecure attachment to her parents a fearful one.

She recounted several incidents during which her mother screamed at her, typically beginning at around midnight and continuing well into the morning. CS' mother kept her

awake with her screaming, which often led CS to miss school the next day, or attend school exhausted and falling asleep. CS' mother demonstrated little regard for CS' need for sleep, or for her education.

CS spoke of her father less than she did about her mother during the interviews. It seems that because she and her father formed an alliance during her teenage years, she has more forgiveness in her heart for him than she does for her mother. Despite this, CS could not rely on her father for support for much of her childhood, as he often was not around. CS recalled a time when she asked her baby sitter "who is that man" referring to her own father. He had been so distant that CS could not recognize the man standing in front of her as family. CS also explained that her father often left the family home for days at a time, frequently without warning or telling the family when he would return. She recounted this behavior in the context of her mother's rampages because he often left as CS' mother was screaming and chasing her out of the house. Her father was also abusive, both psychologically and physically. Prior to CS and her father forming an alliance against her mother, CS disclosed an incident in which her father hit and slapped CS and pulled her hair because she could not stop crying. CS explained that she was crying hysterically, and instead of comforting her, he hit her as a way to control her behavior. CS' father also blamed CS for her mother's behavior, threatening to harm or kill himself because of CS' alleged actions. She recounted her father telling her that he was going to drive off of a cliff because of what she had done, although he did not seem to be clear regarding what exactly CS had done. She often felt responsible for any indiscretion that caused her mother and father to become so angry with her. Because of this, CS spent most of her life blaming herself for her parents'

behaviors. In this respect, CS described her experience of insecure attachment to her parents as one laden with guilt and shame.

Her mother also spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring that CS believed that all negative events were her fault, instilling a pervasive and long-lasting feeling of guilt that she is still working to expel. CS recognized that her mother was abusive and projected her own deficits onto her. This experience of her mother was likely hurtful, as CS recognized that her mother specifically targeted her, rather than anyone else in the household.

Secure Attachment to Romantic Partners

Monkey4's experience with secure attachment to her husband has been one that is opposite of her relationships with her parents. She expressed a feeling of security and stability. Monkey4 spoke about a level of commitment to one another that trumps all other obstacles and difficulties. She emphasized the fact that her husband had never left her, how they braved the journey of his mental illness as a unit, and how even when he was in the midst of a manic episode, he still remained committed to her. She contrasted this to her mother who decided to move to another state, leaving her alone. She also described an open line of communication, a deep empathy of emotional needs, a consistency and continuity in her relationship with her husband that was missing in her relationship with her parents, and a mature and harmonious love that is almost effortless.

CS' experience of secure attachment with her current partner has also been one that is opposite of her experience with her parents. She described feeling as though the two of them are compatible, often solving problems without even having to talk through them. For example, when she and her partner disagreed about the ideal temperature in their home, she was unable to explain how the two of them came to an agreement. Rather, she stated that

they just slowly resolved it without any fussing or arguing. The problem naturally solved itself because of how the two of them interact with one another. She also described feeling understood by her partner, or at least feeling the safety that comes from her partner wanting and trying to understand her the best that he can. She emphasized the effort that her partner puts in to listen and really hear her when she speaks, tuning into the fear that she feels rather than focusing on her outward anger. She described instances in which she and her partner have stayed up late into the night just talking things through, and the happiness she feels because he makes the effort to understand her. Besides this, CS also explained how she and her partner can work through problems even when they do not understand the other person's perspective. CS explained the compromise that the two of them are able to come to, and the understanding that her partner shows her despite not fully understanding the reasoning behind what she is feeling or what she does.

Catalysts of Change Toward Secure Attachment

Although CS and Monkey4 share some similarities in their experiences, for the most part, the critical events that they experienced were unique to them. While Monkey4's parents were neglectful, CS' parents were abusive. This may have led to some differences in the ways Monkey4 and CS perceived relationships, how they coped with their maltreatment, and how they learned to process their abuse and neglect.

Abuse

As mentioned above, CS experienced severe physical, verbal, and psychological abuse from both her mother and her father. She was slapped, suffocated, and verbally accosted on most days throughout her childhood. CS spent much of her life living in fear of her parents, and blamed herself for most negative events in her life because of their abuse.

Her sense of self was affected because she largely internalized the guilt and shame that her parents had instilled in her.

Alliance with Dad

One critical event that stood out was the alliance that CS formed with her father during her adolescence. After this event, during which he vowed not to physically harm her further, CS' father played an active role in removing her from situations in which her mother was physically or verbally abusing her, and made it clear that he was on her side. He assured her that CS' mother was the evil one, demonizing CS' mother and reinforcing a negative perception of her in comparison to him. This allowed CS to feel as though someone was on her team, and that she was not alone in enduring abuse from her mother. This could have played a vital role in her later development to secure attachment. Ibrahim et al. (2016) found in their study that adolescents and young adults with more engaged fathers had lower cortisol responses during stressful tasks. This could have aided CS in reacting less intensely during stressful events in her romantic relationships. Further, studies have shown that children whose fathers are more engaged gain social, cognitive, and emotional benefits (Cowan et al., 2008; Lamb et al., 1985; Pruett, 2000; Shannon et al., 2002), and those whose fathers are less engaged are at a higher risk for cognitive, social, and emotional problems. Some literature also suggests that children who have fathers who are engaged also have a more internal locus of control, more empathy, and a more heterogeneous view of gender roles (Pleck, 1997; Pruett, 1983, 1985; Radin, 1982, 1994).

Fighting Back

CS also spoke about the time during which she recognized that she could fight back. When she grew physically larger than her mother, or when her mother became aware of her

own physical shortcomings, CS refused to continue in her passivity during her mother's physical abuse. In these moments, she was able to take back some control in her life, and protect herself from abuse. Of course, this led to CS feeling guilty about possibly permanently damaging her mother's face, allowing her to also conclude that she can take a step back in situations and make sure that she is actually in danger before reacting. This was an important moment for CS, as she was able to recognize that she does not have to be reactive, and that she can use her judgment in stressful situations. Ultimately, CS fighting back allowed her to play an active role in lessening her mother's abuse.

Depression

Another critical event that CS mentioned was the deep depression that she fell into during high school. During this time, she missed school, did not leave her bed, and no longer responded to her mother. When CS spoke about this depression, it was often in the context of what she could not remember, or what she had forgotten about it. She mentioned that she does not have any specific memory of eating, although she must have. CS described this depressive state as one in which she had no energy and cried, the duration of which episode she is unable to recall.

Romantic Relationships

After leaving home, each of CS' romantic relationships served as critical incidents. She did not disclose the identities of each of her past romantic partners, but instead described them in terms of their mistreatment. In one relationship, she had an epiphany realizing that he possessed every trait that she considered to be a deal-breaker. He was physically abusive, and she disclosed that she had a difficult time recognizing that. This relationship was one of the steps that she needed to take in order to not disregard problematic behaviors in her romantic

partners. Another relationship described was one in which her partner engaged in similar behaviors to her mother in terms of ignoring his hand getting slammed in a door so that he could continue attacking her, and suffocating her. This relationship was another important stepping stone in CS' journey toward a secure attachment, as she was able to recognize that she was becoming romantically involved with men who had the same traits as her mother. One of the most important romantic relationships CS was involved with was with Peter. Her relationship with him allowed her to psychologize her mother, and approach her more objectively and without emotion. She acknowledged being able to separate the two of them and "disperse" the emotions involved with both. It could be that because CS was receiving affection and love from Peter, she no longer felt that she needed it from her mother.

The Death of an Ex-Boyfriend

Peter's death was also a critical incident that allowed her to view herself and her capabilities differently. Specifically, it brought to light how her life and relationships had been improving, how she was able to create more trust in herself, and how she had been better able to establish and maintain boundaries with significant others in her life. CS discovered that she did not need the love of Peter, or her mother. She was able to recognize that she loved both of them, but that she did not need that. She could trust her instincts, and that they did not determine things for her. She determined her life.

Signs

There were also more subtle moments, such as when a butterfly landed on CS' shoulder, solidifying the fact that she would make it through school, or when the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" played as she was contemplating taking the test for her GED. CS took these moments as signs that aspects of her life would end positively, and that she would be

okay. The most important realization that CS came to was the one in which she realized that she did not need her mother's love. This critical incident led to CS setting boundaries with her mother in order to keep herself safe. Now, CS does not allow her mother to ruminate and harass her the way she previously did. Now, CS terminates communication with her as a way to shape her mother's behavior and maintain her own mental health.

Choosing Change

One of the most salient critical incidents for CS was the night that Peter stood her up and she stood staring at herself in the mirror and crying. In that moment she described an almost spiritual experience in which she made the conscious decision not to make the same mistakes, not to allow herself to be mistreated, to create meaningful change in her life. It could be said that this was CS "hitting rock bottom," when she felt as though her life could not have been any worse. "Hitting rock bottom" is a mainstream term that is typically used to describe a point in one's life where things cannot get any worse, and the only way to go is up. In extant literature, the phenomenon of hitting rock bottom is primarily described in terms of substance abuse (Kirouac & Witkiewitz, 2017; Obong'o et al., 2017). Still of value for the present study, is these researchers' acknowledgement that in most instances, "hitting rock bottom" is what spurred individuals to make significant changes in their lives, and successfully maintain these changes. In Obong'o et al.'s study, one participant described "rock bottom" as having nothing left, and having to make the decision to either live or die. This participant was likely speaking literally. Although CS may not have felt that she would physically die, it seems that her rock bottom was one in which she chose thriving, rather than just survival; emotional peace rather than chaos.

Faking It

More critical incidents for CS were her conscious choices to fake confidence and try new things that she typically would not have tried. Some examples were taking a job at a clothing store that she considered to be a “good looking” place, actively participating in school, doing art, and entering a beauty pageant. These decisions were significant in that they were ones that defied her insecurities. CS was insecure about her looks, and began working at what she considered to be a “good looking” place, she worried about others finding out she was a high school dropout, but participated in school, earned good grades, and found herself making more friends anyway. It could be that CS was in the trenches of Erikson’s (1950/1963) Identity Formation versus Identity Confusion, where her identity was more fluid and malleable. CS moved away from her parents, which was crucial in her identity development, as she needed some distance from her parents in order to do so. Simultaneously, CS was making active decisions, almost experimenting with different personas, and changing all the while. Whereas she began college as feeling insecure about her looks and educational background, she developed into a hard-working, academically-involved, and socially healthy individual who was able to be employed with “good looking” others. It is also possible that taking these risks, and succeeding in most of them were also beneficial for CS educationally, socially, and emotionally. This “I’m just going to do it” attitude may have played a huge role in her growth as an early adult.

Trusting in the Self/Knowing What I Need

Some of the most important critical events for CS were the ones in which she realized that she could trust herself; her ability to make decisions, and the ability to know what is best for her. There were moments where CS may not even have been consciously aware that she

was acting in the way that was best for her in the moment. Rather, it was more of a felt sense, or what CS called a spiritual experience. Some examples of these moments were mentioned above regarding school and her social life, choosing to start doing yoga, studying psychology, and choosing dating partners that became more and more well-adjusted over time. All of these are significant because CS did not seem to need anyone to guide her to any of these decisions directly. Rather, she made these choices in a way that seemed random, but were not, in the sense that they were decisions that had direct positive effects on her life. More importantly, she may not have been aware that these decisions were going to have the effects that they did.

Adam

CS spoke of Adam highly, and viewed him as someone who has supported and empathized with her. Her relationship with Adam is significant because he does not embody her mother and father's traits, and because she feels she has a secure attachment to him. CS' relationship with Adam has been a corrective experience in which she could love someone and be loved without chaos and abuse. Adam was able to provide her with a safe space in order to heal from her trauma, while also exploring all of the emotions that she has surrounding her trauma. He does not stifle her or judge her. CS described Adam as someone who makes an effort to understand, but does not need to understand in order to comfort her. He provides her with unconditional love and does not violate her in the ways that she has been violated in the past. CS' relationship with Adam is one in which she is able to process and grow into her own person.

Setting Boundaries with Parents

Another critical moment for CS was when she became more able to establish and maintain boundaries with her parents. When she spoke about boundaries, she spoke more about her mother, and this could be because of the alliance that CS formed with her father during a critical time in her development. CS has suffered psychological trauma because of her mother's tendency to ruminate, despite CS asking her to stop. Today, CS is able to terminate communication with her mother when she is behaving in a way that is triggering to her. As CS mentioned, she no longer feels the deep desire for her mother's love and acceptance to an extent that allows her mother to mistreat her. Rather, CS protects herself from further damage and disengages from the stressor. This is so important for CS, as she recognized the ways in which her mother's behavior can lead to her regression into a younger state, where her only hope was to hit her head against walls. The desperation that CS once felt for her mother to "just stop" led to self-injurious behaviors and a sense of hopelessness that would be detrimental to all of the progress that CS has made.

Mental Health Treatment

CS did not put a lot of emphasis on her participation in mental health services as crucial to her healing. One important aspect of it that she mentioned was the realization of what were not her problems. CS grew up being blamed for all negative things in her and her family's lives, even situations that had not happened yet. Because of this, CS internalized the guilt, and felt guilt even in situations that had nothing to do with her. Therapy helped her to recognize that not everything was her fault, and that she is not important or powerful enough to cause negative events to occur in other people's lives. CS came to the realization that her

parents' issues were not her issues, and this likely helped her to psychologically individuate more smoothly.

Psychology Studies

Although CS did not emphasize the importance of studying psychology as crucial to her healing, it is important to note, as both of my participants are engaged in psychology studies. CS mentioned that her studying psychology allowed her to view her mother as someone who is mentally ill, and therefore treated her more objectively, rather than as someone whose love she desires. It could be that those who experience trauma develop a desire to understand themselves and their abusers, and why their lives happened the way that they did. One therapist wrote about how her own healing and growth goals have changed throughout her experiences with clients (Richard, 2012). More still spoke about their motivations for choosing psychology as a profession, stating that it could have been because of their own psychological pain and childhood trauma (Barnett, 2007). One participant even reported becoming a therapist because she wanted to be important to someone, as she was not important to her parents growing up. It seems that these researchers speculate that often, psychologists with complex trauma have become therapists as a way to either distract themselves from or process through their trauma. Further, Stone (2008) spoke about therapists' trauma bringing about more understanding and empathy, leading the therapist to be able to connect with their clients in a way that allows for healing within both parties. He stated that the therapist often must play several roles in therapy, including ones in which the therapist must empathize with the client, essentially sharing in the client's experiences, while the two process the trauma simultaneously. It seems that for wounded caregivers, there is a healing aspect of healing others that may be what pulls us into the profession. Stone (2008)

emphasized several times that the compassion for others that arises out of a therapist's woundedness is often returned to him or her through others.

Yoga

Choosing to start doing yoga was a huge critical incident in CS' shift from insecure attachment to a secure one. This ties in with CS' felt sense of what it is that she needed in order to heal. She emphasized that yoga gave her some of the tools that she needed in order to fully process her trauma in a safe space. Yoga was imperative in her healing because it almost forced her to have to face whatever emotion that she was experiencing or trying to suppress. CS hypothesized that this process could be brought on by "boredness," and having nothing to do except focus on herself and her internal processes. The extant literature confirms CS' experiences yoga, suggesting that yoga can be an effective treatment for PTSD (Jindani & Khalsa, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2014; Nguyen-Feng et al., 2019; Price et al., 2017; West et al., 2017). This is because yoga has been shown to reduce hyperarousal and reexperiencing symptomology (Mitchell et al., 2014), improve emotional regulation (Dick et al., 2014), produce increases in feeling in control, confident, and secure (Franzblau et al., 2006), and increase self-efficacy, positive affect, energy levels, self-esteem, autonomy, life satisfaction, and competence (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Büssing et al., 2012). Qualitative studies find that practicing yoga allows individuals to feel more gratitude for their progress, compassion for themselves as beings who are "in progress," and acceptance of their lives and their selves as they currently were (West et al., 2017). Further, and much like CS' experience, participants also reported feeling a sense of relatedness to the self, in which they felt greater connectivity with their inner experiences including physiological as well as emotional sensations. This often occurred in the context of becoming more centered and

internally quiet, being able to clear one's mind, ruminate and react less, and think more, and more positively. Examples given by these participants were feeling better able to be attuned to their physical and emotional experiences and a heightened mind-body connection. That allowed for more introspection and analyzing the relationship between past events and present behaviors and emotions. Participants in this study also reported feeling empowered to actively participate in their lives because they felt they had the tools to take control of their lives and confront emotions that they previously avoided (West et al., 2017).

Although Monkey4 and CS share some critical events, CS endured severe abuse and Monkey4 dealt with severe neglect. The two experienced different types of child maltreatment, which could explain some of the differences in critical incidents that exist. They may have utilized different coping mechanisms, attempting to find the one that worked best for them as an individual.

Neglect from Mom

For much of Monkey4's life, her mother was not physically or emotionally present. Monkey4 described her mother as prioritizing her boyfriends and husbands, often choosing to spend her time and energy on them rather than her children. Monkey4 also noted that her mother worked long hours, often leaving the home for days at a time, or not coming home until late at night. Because of this, Monkey4 and her brother's primary time with their mother was when they would visit her at work. Monkey4 recounted an incident in which she sought her mother out for emotional support, and her mother responded by telling Monkey4 that she could not or would not be what she needed her to be. The culmination of her mother's neglectful behaviors was when she decided to move to another state with her then husband,

leaving Monkey4 behind when she was in high school. Monkey4 stated that she felt at the time that her mother never intended on having her move with her.

Dad Who Tried His Best

Critical to Monkey4's development was her father's disability, but more so his willingness and effort to be the emotional support that she needed. Monkey4 spoke about her father bring her and her friends to the beach, buying alcohol for them and supervising even though he was physically unable to participate. She talked about her father making a conscious effort to make sure that she knew he loved her. Monkey4 also talked about how much this meant to her. She often compared her father to her mother, explaining that he never dated other women. It seems that she held a more forgiving stance toward her father. Similar to CS, Monkey4 could have benefitted cognitively, socially, and emotionally from having a supportive father (Cowan et al., 2008; Lamb et al., 1985; Pruett, 2000; Shannon et al., 2002). Further, because research shows that those who had engaged fathers showed lower cortisol levels during stressful tasks, Monkey4 may have been better equipped to handle life on her own after her mother moved away (Ibrahim et al., 2016). Finally, Monkey4's father providing emotional support for Monkey4 could have played a role in her internal locus of control and increased empathy (Pleck, 1997; Pruett, 1983, 1985; Radin, 1982, 1994).

Recognition and Acceptance of Parents' Shortcomings

Monkey4 discussed knowing from a young age that her mother would not be the emotionally supportive person that she wanted her to be. She also discussed understanding that her father was disabled, and that he would not be able to provide all of the things an able-bodied father would. When she spoke on these topics, it seems that she had a high level

of insight from a very young age. It appears that this acceptance of her parents' shortcomings may have played a role in her ability to securely attach to her husband today.

Choosing My Husband

When Monkey4's mother moved away, she was dating her now husband. Monkey4 moved in with her then boyfriend, as his family had also abandoned him. In this time, Monkey4 had a decision to make about her life, and she chose to stay with her boyfriend, who later became her husband. This was a hugely critical incident for Monkey4 as she was forced to make the decision to commit to her boyfriend when she was still a teenager, and because it led to high levels of commitment in her relationship. Further, being with a partner who was as supportive as he was at the time, it allowed for Monkey4 to have a healthy attachment, and find a new family in her husband.

Further, as the relationship progressed, Monkey4's husband became the emotional support that she had been lacking when she was growing up. When speaking about her husband, she often spoke of the things that he offered her that her parents did not; the communication and fulfilling of needs that she craves. She also described their relationship as balanced, mature, and stable which is the opposite of what her childhood felt like. It appears that Monkey4's husband provided Monkey4 with the support, love, respect, and boundaries that she needed in order to develop her sense of self in a safe environment.

Overcoming Husband's Mental Illness

Monkey4 also emphasized overcoming her husband's mental illness as a major critical incident. When her husband first began showing symptoms of his mental illness, he behaved in ways that reminded her of her mother. It was distressing for Monkey4, as she was often treated as the enemy and pushed away when she felt she only had good intentions.

Monkey4 becoming more intentional and proactive about her husband's mental illness and his treatment process was instrumental in managing his symptoms, strengthening their relationship, and reinforcing Monkey4's learned belief that if she can be intentional in her relationships, then she can make them as positive as she wants them to be.

Church Family

Monkey4 spoke about acquiring a church family as a critical incident as well. She discussed connecting with the loving and accepting parts of religion, and feeling as though church was what helped her to persevere during difficult times. Her church family made her feel supported, accepted, nurtured, and loved. The messages that she received at church were opposite from those that she received from family growing up. Being involved in church also help guide her in her marriage, and become more self-reflective. These things likely helped her to develop a more positive and stable sense of self, change her perspective of herself and her relationship, and improve her attachment to her husband.

Having Children

Monkey4 also discussed having children with her husband as a critical incident that led her and her husband to work harder at their relationship. She spoke of the recognition that it was no longer only herself and her husband involved, but rather two other lives that were intertwined with theirs. The children acted as motivators for Monkey and her husband to react differently to each other, and could have played a role in Monkey4 being more intentional in the relationship, and the two of them working harder to make things work harmoniously.

Therapy

Seeking out mental health treatment was a critical incident for Monkey4 in which she learned how to separate herself from others' problems. She discussed growing up feeling as though other people's dysfunction was hers, and that other people's bad moods were hers. Being in therapy has helped her to see the dividing lines between what is her problem to own, and what problems are others' to own. This was likely good for Monkey4's sense of self and self-esteem, as she was no longer harboring the problems of her family members, and feeling guilty about problems that she could not control or solve. Rather, she only carries her own problems with her, along with the power of knowing that she can solve them.

Psychology Studies

Monkey4 choosing to pursue an education in psychology was a critical incident because it gave her the knowledge and the tools to view people in a different light. She discussed the importance of learning about people and why they behave the way that they do. Specifically, she spoke about learning more about her mother as a person rather than as a mother, and understanding why she has made the choices she has made in her life. This learning has led Monkey4 to a place where she can be satisfied with the relationship she currently has with her mother, knowing that this is likely the best relationship that she can create with her mother. Monkey4 spoke about viewing people are both good and bad, and not judging the bad parts as being part of the person, but rather as a result of the dysfunction that that person has in his or her life. Like CS, Monkey4 likely also was drawn to psychology because of her own emotional pain (Barnett, 2007), and likely benefits in the same ways as well. Because Monkey4 has experienced complex trauma, she feels a deep sense of empathy

and connectedness with others, and may utilize this in order to help heal others, which in turn also helps to heal her (Stone, 2008).

Using Learned Knowledge to Better Relationships

When looking at all of Monkey4's experiences, they all seem to lead to a place where Monkey4 has come to the realization that she can be intentional in her relationships and this can lead to her having the best possible relationships. Taking it a step further, Monkey4 also recognizes that if the relationship is the best that it can be, then she can accept it, since she has the insight to recognize that it is at its strongest. Monkey4 spoke about being intentional in her relationships several times throughout the interview, and it seems that her understanding is that in order for her relationships to be positive, she needs to be intentional. She mentioned that when her husband was wrestling with his mental illness, he was not always the healthiest person, so she said that she had to be intentional and understanding about where he was at to ensure that the relationship was remaining healthy. Monkey4 spoke about her current relationships with her parents, and the need for intentionality in these relationships. She explained that she needs to be intentional, set firm boundaries, and interact with her parents in ways that ensure she has the best possible relationship with them. Monkey4 wishes to have the best possible relationship with each of her parents, and recognizes that these are the ways to ensure this. Monkey4 also spoke about intentionality in her own life and behaviors, ensuring that her life would be different from her family members' lives. For example, choosing to be more thoughtful about her decisions rather than being impulsive as she viewed her mother to be, or following the law unlike some of her other family members. This pattern of intentionality likely began during her childhood when she was interacting with her mother. Monkey4 mentioned that she often wanted more from

her mother, but did not receive it. She also mentioned that she had to make the effort to spend time with her mother while her mother was working. Monkey4 disclosed that this was often the only time that she got to spend with her mother, especially if her mother was working at conventions for days at a time. In Monkey4's relationship with her mother, she had to make an effort if she wanted to have her needs met. This is likely where Monkey4 internalized the requirement for effort if she wanted her relationships to be positive in the ways she needs them to be.

I Created This

In both CS' and Monkey4's narratives, it seems that the significance of their secure attachments with their romantic partners despite having insecure attachments to their parents is that they created the secure attachments, and that they trusted themselves enough to create those attachments. They both emphasize making decisions throughout their lives and having to learn to trust in themselves and their decision-making; that they knew what was best for them and had the power to make those things happen. For CS, it was the mirror incident in which she decided not to be abused in relationships anymore. After that moment, CS made conscious choices to improve her life and her circumstances which led to her being in a healthy, securely attached relationship now. For Monkey4, it was choosing her husband at a very young age and choosing to be intentional in her life and in her relationships in order to ensure that she is making the best out of everything. The most important aspects in these disclosures are that they were the ones that made the decisions, the decisions were not made for them. They can take pride in the fact that, despite the adversity that they faced growing up, they were able to turn their attachment styles around and create a better life.

Clinical Implications of the Study

The present study revealed the importance of one's own industry and self-knowledge. Further, the importance of encouraging individuals to search for solutions within themselves, since it appears that we often have the answers that we need. The participants in the present study did not realize it, but they had been trusting themselves when making decisions in their lives. CS chose to feign confidence until she felt it by immersing herself in every opportunity that she was presented with, working at a job that she felt was only for "good looking people," joining clubs, entering a beauty pageant. Although she was not always met with success, she engaged in activities that she internally and unconsciously knew would help her to rebuild the life that she wanted from the ashes that she felt were her life. She also instinctively began doing yoga, which played a huge role in her healing process. She was able to trust herself to know what she needed, and in the process gained exponentially more trust in herself. Monkey4 made the decision to keep her husband as her family from a young age. She allowed herself to trust in him and build a life with him. She also began a religious journey, on which she found her church family as another support system. Even before that, Monkey4 made the decision to accept her parents' shortcomings. Both CS and Monkey4 sought out mental health treatment as well as careers in psychology, which were imperative in their quest for healing. From this study, one can glean that it is important for mental health providers, mentors, and other mental health allies to foster insight into one's own needs. Rather than telling clients what they need, and what they must do to attain them, we should allow clients to discover for themselves what is important to them and how they should go about getting their needs met.

Aside from fostering insight into oneself, it seems that it is also important to teach our patients to trust in that insight. Even if a person has the knowledge about what their needs are and how they can get those need met, if they do not trust in that knowledge, they likely will not seek out the means to meet their needs. CS and Monkey4 did not consciously know that the decisions they were making were going to be the best ones for them, but they trusted in the process and allowed themselves to make these decisions. As therapists, we should encourage our clients to introspect and search for answers within themselves, and also learn to trust in the self as the expert on the self, rather than looking to others for the answers.

Another important aspect of this study was finding corrective attachment experiences. Both Monkey4 and CS found romantic partners who were opposite of their parents. It may be important for clinicians to emphasize the importance of introspecting, trusting their instincts, and paying attention to personality traits of potential romantic partners. Although it may be possible to establish a secure attachment with someone who shares personality traits with parents to whom we were insecurely attached, it is more likely that a secure attachment will be more attainable with those who share less personality traits with parents. Furthermore, clinicians may aid in this process by pointing out parallel processes occurring with relationships with caregivers and relationships with romantic partners. While clients may be somewhat unaware of how similar their partners are to their parents, clinicians may be able to tactfully point out the similarities so that our clients may avoid these relationships.

Also important to note is Monkey4's endeavors to find familial relationships with others who were not her family. In her church, Monkey4 found a family in which she felt supported, nurtured, and cared for. Her church provided her with a safe place to be herself and grow, and was a guiding hand in her marriage. As clinicians, we may help our clients by

encouraging them to expand their social support networks to include those who may act as an alternative family, and to provide a corrective familial experience to aid in the change of attachment style.

Limitations of the Study

Limited Experience

Given that this was a clinical research project conducted by a doctoral student, rather than a seasoned researcher, there were several limitations that should be addressed. First, and likely most importantly, is the limited experience of myself, the researcher. Besides studies conducted under the supervision of a professor as a requirement for a class, I had no prior research experience before beginning the present study. This meant that much of the learning regarding the application of research methods was done in the process of conducting the study, and guidance was required from committee members. Furthermore, my lack of experience meant that coding the data, as mentioned above, would likely be at risk of being more etic, rather than emic, and that I may miss out on data that is representative of the participants' experiences. Peer examination and peer debriefing were needed in order to be sure that valuable data was not dropped from the codes.

Biases

I am a stakeholder in this study, as attachment style, and more importantly the changing of attachment style, is a topic that is close to my heart, primarily because of past and present experiences. From the outset of the study, I had a hope that it is possible to change attachment style, and that the changing of attachment style is something that can be worked for, rather than something that happens by chance or by luck. Because of this bias, I may have asked follow-up questions that could have possibly derailed the participant's train

of thought or disrupted some of the data that they would have shared if I had not interrupted. Throughout the present study, it was difficult to remain objective because of the stake that I hold in the topic of attachment style, and I know that I may have lost some invaluable data because of this.

Another difficulty that may have limited the study is the fact that I am a clinical psychology student and a therapist. Keeping to the researcher role was difficult, as when the participants were speaking, my mind was engaging in conceptualizing and creating its own understanding of the participant. This led to my asking leading or dichotomous questions that took away from the data, since I cannot use my own as words as quotes from the participant, and because my words may not actually represent the participant's true understanding of themselves or their experiences.

Time and Money Constraints

The present study was conducted as a requirement for a doctoral program, and as such I only had a certain amount of time to complete it. Furthermore, I did not seek or receive any kind of funding in order to conduct this study, because it is a clinical research project completed for credit in a doctoral program. Thus, the present study only included two participants, and only included two interviews for each, which, realistically, is not sufficient to produce generalizable results. Although this is a qualitative study, having only two participants is still limited, and more participants and further research would be needed in order to produce results that could be more representative of and generalizable to individuals who suffered attachment injuries during childhood and went on to develop secure attachments later in life.

Moreover, the fact that this study was conducted in Hawai‘i, where the population is mixed and culturally collectivistic, affects reliability. This is because the culture in Hawai‘i is unique, and so it is difficult to assert that the results of the present study would be replicable in the continental United States or anywhere else in the world without similar studies replicating the methodology in those locations.

Literature Review

As with any literature review, the present one has its limitations and projections for future studies. First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that much of the literature on this topic was comprised of samples collected from university settings. This limits the generalizability of the findings to participants in early adulthood, with little knowledge of adolescents, mid-life adults, and the elderly. Such populations are the majority of the general population, and data from these cohorts is just as important as that from early adults. Secondly, there is a scarcity of research on the gay, lesbian, and especially bisexual and transgender population in the literature. This creates an even larger gap in the research that merits more study. Thirdly, the majority of the literature on this topic focuses primarily on Caucasians. Although the majority of the US population is Caucasian, this trend is dwindling, and people of Native American, Native Hawaiian, Asian American, Hispanic, African American and other underserved populations deserve research dedicated to them as well. Future research may focus on larger sample sizes that are more diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Moreover, several of the studies mentioned in this literature review used self-report measures, when more objective measures were available. Although the results likely would be fairly similar, and the psychometrics of these measures were adequate, objective measures

tend to be more valid and reliable in terms of avoiding bias from the examinees. Since human beings have the tendency to paint a portrait of themselves that is slightly more favorable than their true selves, self-report measures can sometimes yield results that are not representative of participants' genuine selves. Future research may benefit from more objective and less self-report measures in order to preserve the integrity of the research.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Regarding attachment style in general, it would be beneficial for more researchers to take on the responsibility of conducting more qualitative, rather than quantitative research studies. The current body of research is primarily quantitative and correlational in nature, meaning that there is little room to make causal attributions for any of the results. This topic may be examined more in-depth using face-to-face semi-structured interviews in which participants are asked specifically of the nuances and caveats of attachment style, emotional intelligence, and attribution style, and how they explain their effects on the intimacy they feel (or do not feel) in their own romantic relationships. This invaluable and rich data would add to the current body of research.

In relation to the present study, it would be beneficial for future studies to include more participants, and more diverse participants, including men and women, LGBTQ+ participants, young, middle, and older adults, and from varying races, religious backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. Although the findings of this study do not seem to be related to the gender, sexuality, age, religion, or socioeconomic status of the participants, it would be beneficial to know what types of critical events happen for individuals in some groups and not others that could help to facilitate the development of secure attachment after attachment injury during childhood.

Further, it seems that a study in which more and longer interviews are involved would be able to better reach theoretical saturation. Since a clinical research project is time- and fund-limited, it was difficult to be able to conduct the amount of interviews that would allow for a richer and deeper understanding of the participants' true experiences. Being able to elaborate more on each of the themes would be beneficial for data analysis, since there would be fewer gaps to fill, and more data could help to build a more complete picture of each participant's emic experience with attachment injury and what experiences were critical in building a secure attachment with their current romantic partners.

Conclusion

This study has been one that has pushed me to think beyond my own developmental level regarding attachment in order to understand my participants' experiences. I felt at a loss during member checks when both of my participants asked me about what my findings were. In analyzing the data and truly getting to know my participants beginning with all of their deepest trauma, it appears that there is no singular, simple answer to the question of how one can switch from insecure attachment to a secure one. Both CS and Monkey4 had several experiences that slowly allowed them to develop the secure attachment that they have today. For CS, it was hitting rock bottom and then making conscious decisions to change her life and take control of her healing. For Monkey4, it was finding a family outside of her family of origin, overcoming obstacles in her marriage that built further on their existing commitment to one another, and choosing to be intentional in order to get the most out of her relationships. What can be gathered from my CS and Monkey4's data is that in their experiences and throughout their lives, they learned to trust in themselves and their own judgment and their own power to create change in their lives. For both of my participants, it

seems that this trust in the self was what helped push them to make decisions that led them to their respective, securely attached romantic relationships.

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Bell, S. M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development*, 41, 49-67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1127388>
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Bell, S. M., & Stayton, D. J. (1971) Individual differences in strange-situation behavior of one-year-olds. In H. R. Schaffer (Ed.) *The origins of human social relations* (pp. 17-58). Academic Press.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Erlbaum.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Wittig, B. A. (1969). *Attachment and exploratory behaviour of one-year-olds in a strange situation. Determinants of infant behaviour*. Methuen.
- Allen, E. S., & Baucom, D. H. (2004). Adult attachment and patterns of extradyadic involvement. *Family Process*, 43(4), 467-488. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2004.00035.x>
- Barnett, M. (2007). What brings you here? An exploration of the unconscious motivations of those who choose to train and work as psychotherapists and counsellors. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 13(3), 257-274. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1127388>
- Batool, S. S., & Khalid, R. (2012). Emotional intelligence: A predictor of marital quality in Pakistani couples. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 27(1), 65-88.
- Beldoch, M. (1964), Sensitivity to expression of emotional meaning in three modes of communication. In J. R. Davitz (Eds), *The communication of emotional meaning* (pp. 31-42). Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss (vol. H). Separation: Anxiety and anger*. Basic

Books.

- Brackett, M. A., Warner, R. M., & Bosco, J. S. (2005). Emotional intelligence and relationship quality among couples. *Personal Relationships*, 12(2), 197-212.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1350-4126.2005.00111.x>
- Brennan, K. A., Clark, C. L., & Shaver, P. R. (1998). Self-report measurement of adult attachment: An integrative overview. In J. A. Simpson & W. S. Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment and close relationships* (pp. 46-76). Guilford Press.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>
- Büssing, A., Michalsen, A., Khalsa, S. B. S., Telles, S., & Sherman, K. J. (2012). Effects of yoga on mental and physical health: a short summary of reviews. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2012.
<https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/165410>
- Christiansen, S. L., & Palkovitz, R. (1998). Exploring Erikson's psychosocial theory of development: Generativity and its relationship to paternal identity, intimacy, and involvement in childcare. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 7(1), 133-156.
<https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.0701.133>
- Collins, N. L., & Allard, L. M. (2001). Cognitive representations of attachment: The content and function of working models. In Fletcher, G. & Clark, S. (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes* (vol. 2; pp. 60-85). Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Collins, N. L., & Feeney, B. C. (2004). Working models of attachment shape perceptions of

- social support: evidence from experimental and observational studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(3), 363-383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.87.3.363>
- Collins, N. L., Ford, M. B., Guichard, A. C., & Allard, L. M. (2006). Working models of attachment and attribution processes in intimate relationships. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(2), 201-219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205280907>
- Cowan, P. A., Cowan, C. P., Cohen, N., Pruett, M. K., & Pruett, K. (2008). Supporting fathers' engagement with their kids. *Raising Children: Emerging Needs, Modern Risks, and Social Responses*, 44-80.
- Delamont, S. (1992). *Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls and perspectives*. Falmer.
- Derlega, V. J., & Chaikin, A. L. (1977). Privacy and self-disclosure in social relationships. *Journal of Social Issues*, 33, 102-115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1977.tb01885.x>
- Derlega, V., G., & Grzalak, J. (1979). Appropriateness of self-disclosure. In G. J. Chelune (Ed.) *Self-disclosure* (151-176). Jossey-Bass.
- Dewitte, M., Koster, E. H., De Houwer, J., & Buysse, A. (2007). Attentive processing of threat and adult attachment: A dot-probe study. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 45, 1307-1317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2006.11.004>
- Dick, A. M., Niles, B. L., Street, A. E., DiMartino, D. M., & Mitchell, K. S. (2014). Examining mechanisms of change in a yoga intervention for women: The influence of mindfulness, psychological flexibility, and emotion regulation on PTSD symptoms.

Journal of Clinical Psychology, 70(12), 1170-1182.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22104>

Durtschi, J. A., Fincham, F. D., Cui, M., Lorenz, F. O., & Conger, R. D. (2011). Dyadic processes in early marriage: Attributions, behavior, and marital quality. *Family Relations*, 60(4), 421-434. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00655.x>

Erikson, E. (1950/1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). W. W. Norton.

Erikson, E. H., Paul, I. H., Heider, F., & Gardner, R. W. (1959). *Psychological issues* (vol. 1). International Universities Press.

Esposito, M. (2015). Women in prison: Unhealthy lives and denied well-being between loneliness and seclusion. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 63(3-4), 137-158.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-015-9561-y>

Eryilmaz, A., & Doğan, T. (2013). The mediator role of need satisfaction between subjective well-being and romantic relationship quality. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 53, 79-96.

Erzar, T., & Erzar, K. (2008). 'If I commit to you, I betray my parents': Some negative consequences of the intergenerational cycle of insecure attachment for young adult romantic relationships. *Sexual & Relationship Therapy*, 23(1), 25-35.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681990701660408>

Feeney, J. A., & Noller, P. (1990). Attachment style as a predictor of adult romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(2), 281-291.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.2.281>

Fehr, B. & Perlman, D. (1987). The development of intimate relationships. In D. Perlman and S. Duck (Eds.), *Intimate relationships* (pp. 14-32). Sage Publications.

- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult romantic attachment: Theoretical developments, emerging controversies, and unanswered questions. *Review of General Psychology*, 4, 132-154. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.4.2.132>
- Franzblau, S., Smith, M., Echevarria, S., & Van Cantfort, T. (2006). Take a breath, break the silence: the effects of yogic breathing and testimony about battering on feelings of self-efficacy in battered women. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 16(1), 49-57.
- Freud, S. (1977). *Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*. WW Norton & Company.
- Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Pearson.
- Gosnell, C. L., & Gable, S. L. (2013). Attachment and capitalizing on positive events. *Attachment & Human Development*, 15(3), 281-302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2013.782655>
- Goleman D. (1996) *Emotional intelligence*. Bloomsbury.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Gottman, J. M., & Krokoff, L. J. (1989). Marital interaction and satisfaction: A longitudinal view. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 57, 47-52. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.57.1.47>
- Graham, J. M., & Conoley, C. W. (2006). The role of marital attributions in the relationship between life stressors and marital quality. *Personal Relationships*, 13(2), 231-241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2006.00115.x>
- Guerrero, L. K. (1996). Attachment-style differences in intimacy and involvement: A test of the four-category model. *Communications Monographs*, 63(4), 269-292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759609376395>
- Hatfield, E. (1984). Blabbermouths and clams: Sex differences in self-disclosure in same-sex

- and cross-sex friendship dyads. *Psychology of Woman Quarterly*, 5(3), 385-401.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1981.tb00581.x>
- Heaven, P., & Cassar, M. (2003). The influence of personality and attributional style on relationship adjustment. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 55, 185.
- Hegelson, V. S., Shaver, P. R., & Dyer, M. (1987). Prototypes of intimacy and distance in same-sex and opposite-sex relationship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 4, 195-233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407587042006>
- Hesse, E., & Main, M. (2000). Disorganized infant, child, and adult attachment: Collapse in behavioral and attentional strategies. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 48(4), 1097-1127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651000480041101>
- Hrapczynski, K. M., Epstein, N. B., Werlinich, C. A., & LaTaillade, J. J. (2012). Changes in negative attributions during couple therapy for abusive behavior: Relations to changes in satisfaction and behavior. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 38(Supp S1), 117-132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00264.x>
- Ibrahim, M. H., Somers, J. A., Luecken, L. J., Fabricius, W. V., & Cookston, J. T. (2017). Father–adolescent engagement in shared activities: Effects on cortisol stress response in young adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 31(4), 485.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000259>
- Jindani, F. A., & Khalsa, G. F. S. (2015). A yoga intervention program for patients suffering from symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder: A qualitative descriptive study. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 21(7), 401–408.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2014.0262>
- Karakurt, G. (2012). The interplay between self esteem, feeling of inadequacy, dependency,

- and romantic jealousy as a function of attachment processes among Turkish college students. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 34(3), 334-345.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-012-9185-7>
- Kazimierczak, M., & Blazek, M. (2015). Attachment styles as predictors of the perception of couples' cohesion. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 43(6), 1055-1056.
<https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2015.43.6.1055>
- Kimmes, J. G., Durtschi, J. A., Clifford, C. E., Knapp, D. J., & Fincham, F. D. (2015). The role of pessimistic attributions in the association between anxious attachment and relationship satisfaction. *Family Relations*, 64(4), 547-562.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12130>
- Kirouac, M., & Witkiewitz, K. (2017). Identifying “hitting bottom” among individuals with alcohol problems: Development and evaluation of the Noteworthy Aspects of Drinking Important to Recovery (NADIR). *Substance Use & Misuse*, 52(12), 1602–1615. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2017.1293104>
- Lamb, M. E., Pleck, J. H., Charnov, E. L., & Levine, J. A. (1985). Paternal behavior in humans. *American Zoologist*, 883-894.
- Lauer, R. H., Lauer, J. C., & Kerr, S. T. (1990). The long-term marriage: Perceptions of stability and satisfaction. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 31, 189-195. <https://doi.org/10.2190/H4X7-9DVX-W2N1-D3BF>
- LeCompte, M. D. Preissle (2003). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Academic Press.
- Mackey, R. A., O'Brien, B. A., & Mackey, E. F. (1997). *Gay and lesbian couples: Voices from lasting relationships*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

- Mackinnon, S. P., Nosko, A., Pratt, M. W., & Norris, J. E. (2011). Intimacy in young adults' narratives of romance and friendship predicts eriksonian generativity: A mixed method analysis. *Journal of Personality*, 79(3), 587-617.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2011.00692.x>
- Main, M., & Solomon, J. (1990). Procedures for identifying infants as disorganized/disoriented during the Ainsworth Strange Situation. In M. T. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti, & E. M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years* (pp. 121-160). University of Chicago Press.
- Malone, J. C., Westen, D., & Levendosky, A. A. (2011). Personalities of adults with traumatic childhood separations. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 67(12), 1259-1282.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20844>
- Malouff, J. M., Schutte, N. S., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2014). Trait emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 42(1), 53-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2012.748549>
- Marion, D., Laursen, B., Zettergren, P., & Bergman, L. R. (2013). Predicting life satisfaction during middle adulthood from peer relationships during mid-adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(8), 1299-1307.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-9969-6>
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(3), 197-215.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02
- Mayseless, O., & Scharf, M. (2007). Adolescents' attachment representations and their

- capacity for intimacy in close relationships. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 17(1), 23-50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2007.00511.x>
- Mitchell, K. S., Dick, A. M., DiMartino, D. M., Smith, B. N., Niles, B., Koenen, K. C., & Street, A. (2014). A pilot study of a randomized controlled trial of yoga as an intervention for PTSD symptoms in women. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 27(2), 121–128. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21903>
- Monsour, M. (1992). Meanings of intimacy in cross- and same-sex friendships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 9, 277-295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407592092007>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Nguyen-Feng, V. N., Clark, C. J., & Butler, M. E. (2019). Yoga as an intervention for psychological symptoms following trauma: A systematic review and quantitative synthesis. *Psychological Services*, 16(3), 513–523. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000191>
- Obong'o, C. O., Alexander, A. C., Chavan, P. P., Dillon, P. J., & Kedia, S. K. (2017). Choosing to live or die: Online narratives of recovering from methamphetamine abuse. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 49(1), 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2016.1262085>
- Osterhout, R. E., Frame, L. E., & Johnson, M. D. (2011). Maladaptive attributions and dyadic behavior are associated in engaged couples. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, 30(8), 787-818. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2011.30.8.787>
- Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2001). Trait emotional intelligence: Psychometric

- investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies. *European Journal of Personality*, 15(6), 425-448. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.416>
- Pielage, S. B., Luteijn, F., & Arrindell, W. A. (2005). Adult attachment, intimacy and psychological distress in a clinical and community sample. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 12(6), 455-464. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.472>
- Pleck, J. H. (1997). Paternal involvement: Levels, sources and consequences. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (3rd ed., pp. 66–103, 325–332). Wiley.
- Price, M., Spinazzola, J., Musicaro, R., Turner, J., Suvak, M., Emerson, D., & van der Kolk, B. (2017). Effectiveness of an extended yoga treatment for women with chronic posttraumatic stress disorder. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 23(4), 300–309. <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2015.0266>
- Pruett, K. D. (1983). Infants of primary nurturing fathers. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 38, 257–277.
- Pruett, K. D. (1985). Children of the fathermothers: Infants of primary nurturing fathers. In J. D. Call, E. Galenson, & R. L. Tyson (Eds.), *Frontiers of Infant Psychiatry* (Vol. 2, pp. 375–380). Basic Books.
- Pruett, K. D. (2000). *Fatherneed: Why father care is as essential as mother care for your child*. Free Press.
- Radin, N. (1982). Primary caregiving and role-sharing fathers. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *Nontraditional families: Parenting and child development* (pp. 173–204). Erlbaum.
- Radin, N. (1994). Primary-caregiving fathers in intact families. In A. E. Gottfried & A. W.

- Gottfried (Eds.), *Redefining families: Implications for children's development* (pp. 11–54). Plenum.
- Richard, A. (2012). The wounded healer: can we do better than survive as therapist? *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 7(1), 131-138.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15551024.2011.606967>
- Riggs, S. A., & Kaminski, P. (2010). Childhood emotional abuse, adult attachment, and depression as predictors of relational adjustment and psychological aggression. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19(1), 75-104.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926770903475976>
- Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2016). *An introduction to qualitative research: Learning in the field*. Sage Publications.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.
- Schröder-Abé, M., & Schütz, A. (2011). Walking in each other's shoes: Perspective taking mediates effects of emotional intelligence on relationship quality. *European Journal of Personality*, 25(2), 155-169. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.818>
- Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Bobik, C., Coston, T. D., Greeson, C., Jedlicka, C., Rhodes, E., & Wendorf, G. (2001). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 141(4), 523-536.
- Shannon, J. D., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., London, K., & Cabrera, N. (2002). Beyond rough and tumble: Low-income fathers' interactions and children's cognitive development at 24 months. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, 2(2), 77-104.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327922PAR0202_01

- Singer, J. A., & Skerrett, K. (2014). *Positive couple therapy: Using we-stories to enhance resilience*. Routledge.
- Smith, L., Heaven, P. C., & Ciarrochi, J. (2008). Trait emotional intelligence, conflict communication patterns, and relationship satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44(6), 1314-1325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.11.024>
- Sneed, J. R., Whitbourne, S., Schwartz, S. J., & Huang, S. (2012). The relationship between identity, intimacy, and midlife well-being: Findings from the Rochester Adult Longitudinal Study. *Psychology and Aging*, 27, 318-323. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026378>
- Snyder, N. P. (1991). The experience of intimacy: Interviews with lesbian women and heterosexual women and men in long-term relationships (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1991). *University Microfilms International*, 4012.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic review*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publication.
- Stone, D. (2008). Wounded healing: Exploring the circle of compassion in the helping relationship. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 36(1), 45-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873260701415587>
- Sullivan, H. S. (1953). *Interpersonal theory of psychiatry*. W. W. Norton.
- Towler, A., & Stuhlmacher, A. F. (2013). Attachment styles, relationship satisfaction, and well-being in working women. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 153(3), 279-298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2012.735282>
- West, J., Liang, B., & Spinazzola, J. (2017). Trauma sensitive yoga as a complementary

- treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder: A qualitative descriptive analysis. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 24(2), 173–195.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000040>
- Wong, H. (1981). Typologies of intimacy. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 5(3), 435-443.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1981.tb00584.x>
- Wynne, L. C., & Wynne, A. R. (1986). The quest for intimacy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 12(4), 383-394. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.1986.tb00671.x>
- Yumbul, C., Cavusoglu, S., & Geyimci, B. (2010). WCPCG-2010: The effect of childhood trauma on adult attachment styles, infidelity tendency, romantic jealousy and self-esteem. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5(WCPCG 2010), 1741-1745.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.357>
- Zarch, Z. N., Marashi, S. M., & Raji, H. (2014). The relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction: 10-year outcome of partners from three different economic levels. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry*, 9(4), 188-196.
- Zeidner, M., & Kaluda, I. (2008). Romantic love: What's emotional intelligence (EI) got to do with it? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44(8), 1684-1695.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.01.018>

APPENDICES

A. Copy of IRB Certification Letters (Argosy University)



November 21, 2018

Kelsea Imose
99-1390 Halawa Heights Road
Aiea, HI 96701

kelseaimose@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Imose,

Your Level 3 application, "The Development of Secure Attachment After Attachment Injury During Childhood," is fully certified by the Institutional Review Board as of 11-16-2018.

You need to abide by the requirements in any letters of permission you have obtained.

Please note that research must be conducted according to this application that was certified by the IRB. Your proposal should have been revised to be consistent with your application. Please note that you also need to abide by any requirements specified in your letter of permission. Any changes you make to your study need to be reported to and certified by the IRB.

Any adverse events or reactions need to be reported to the IRB immediately.

Your full application is certified for one year from 11-16-2018. Please be aware that if your study is not likely to be completed one year from 11-16-2018, you will need to file a **Continuing Review for IRB or Continuing Certification of Compliance** form with the IRB at least two months before that date to obtain recertification. If your proposal is not recertified within the year specified (365 days), your IRB certification expires and you must immediately cease data collection.

When you have completed your research you will also need to inform the IRB of this in writing and complete the required forms. You may use the **Project Completion Report** form for this purpose. Records must be retained for at least three years.

Good Luck with your research!

Please be careful not to lose this letter.

If you have questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Anderson Jr.", followed by a circular stamp or seal.

Robert M. Anderson Jr., Ph.D., Co-Chair
Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Kathryn Chun

B. IRB Certification Letters (Chaminade University)



**Chaminade
University**

Institutional Review Board.
Chair: Helen Turner, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair: Claire Wright, Ph.D.
Vice Chair: Darren Iwamoto, Ph.D.
irb@chaminade.edu

May 8, 2019

Ms. Kelsea Imose
99-1390 Halawa Heights Road
Aiea, Hawaii 96701

Dear Ms. Imose:

This letter is to confirm receipt of your Argosy University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for "The Development of Secure Attachment After Attachment Injury During Childhood".

The CUH IRB IRB00007927 reviewed the above IRB external approval.

The Chaminade University IRB will accept your current number and will not require reapproval at this time. Your Chaminade IRB protocol number is CUH 094-2019. You will now be entered into our annual report cycle (due date below). Please use the attached Form IV to complete your annual reporting.

The final date for your Argosy approval is November 16th 2019. Continuation of research after this date will require:

1. Submission of Form IV Final Report; and
2. Request for an extension letter to be submitted to irb@chaminade.edu 30-days prior to the expiration date of your Argosy approval. The Board may require a new protocol submission, so please do this as early as possible.

Effective proposal approval date: November 16th 2018

Date of annual or final report due to Chaminade IRB: November 16th 2019

Please submit a copy of your current CITI training certifiable by email to irb@chaminade.edu. Please be advised that if you submit future protocols to our IRB we will require updated CITI certification aligned with Chaminade's requirements.

Please feel free to contact the IRB above with any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Helen Turner, PhD
Chair, Chaminade IRB Committee

C. Copy of Initial Informed Consent Form (Pre-field entry)

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE ATTACHMENT
AFTER ATTACHMENT INJURY**

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University

INITIAL CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

1. *Who is the researcher?* My name is Kelsea Imose and I am a student at the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University. I am conducting this study in partial fulfillment of my requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology, in Clinical Psychology.
2. *What is the aim of the study?* The aim of this qualitative clinical research project is to explore the experience of individuals who experienced challenges to the security of your relationship with your parents during childhood but went on to develop secure intimate relationships as an adult, the experiences they have had at different times in their lives, and the meanings they have given to those experiences. The ultimate aim of this study is to help me understand more about your experiences and what they have meant to you.
3. *How was I chosen?* I have chosen you because I believe that you have some valuable insights to offer. More specifically, based on your life experiences I feel that I could learn a great amount from you about the process of establishing secure relationships over the lifespan.
4. *What will be involved in participating?* I would like to meet with you two times. Our first meeting would last between one hour to one hour-and-a-half. During that meeting, I would like to explore some critical events with your parents from your childhood and some critical events during the development of a secure attachment from an adult intimate relationship(s). With your permission, I would like to audio record our conversations and make transcriptions from the audio recordings, so that I may attempt to represent your perspectives with greater accuracy. During our second meeting, I would like to review your transcripts with you and my understanding of what you have shared with me.
5. *Who will know what I say?* In addition to me, members of my support team will have limited access to your tapes and transcripts in order to assist me. My support team includes my Clinical Research Project Chair who will serve as my methodological

consultant: Kathryn Chun, Ph. D.; my peer debriefer/peer examiner: Joy Tanji, Ph.D. I will transcribe and audit the audiorecording of our conversation. The role of my Clinical Research Project Chair is to oversee this process and provide me with further instructional support. The role of my debriefer is to help me tell your story with as much accuracy as possible. The role of my peer examiner is to check my analysis of our accuracy as possible. My role of transcriptionist is to generate a verbatim transcript of our conversation and my role of my auditor is to check the accuracy of my transcriptions.

6. *What potential risks are associated with participation?* Although I do not foresee any major risks to you, talking about your experiences may bring up some unexpected memories and insights that can be upsetting. The remembrance and experience of intense feelings associated with critical experiences may be painful and unresolved. Should this happen, I would like to stop the interview, turn off the recorder, and take time off the record to better understand what is coming up for you. Then, I would like to support you in deciding what may be the most helpful way to address these concerns. This might include withdrawing from the study. Your welfare, above all else, is important to me. Whatever we discuss off the record will not be included as part of the data in the study. I will allow you to determine when we will turn the recorder back on.

During the study, I will attempt to protect not only your confidentiality, but your anonymity as well. Since this is a small community, though, there is always the possible risk that despite my efforts, someone who reads the study may be able to figure out who you are. To minimize this risk, your name will not appear on any transcripts or in my provisional write-up. In addition, when not in use, I will store your audiorecordings and transcripts in a locked filing cabinet or locked file box to which only I have the key/combination. The transcriptionist, peer debriefers, peer examiners, auditors, and research consultants will only have access to these materials when performing their duties as described above. In my journal entries and discussions with them, I will not refer to you by name. Instead, I will use a code name of your choosing. Please indicate the name you would like me to use for you in my study: _____.

Your confidentiality will be protected at all times, as the law requires, with the following exception: I am required by law to inform an appropriate other person if there is reasonable suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult has been abused by you. My intent would be to ensure your safety and the safety of others by networking you to resources that could support you through current challenges. In such an instance, we might also decide to temporarily stop the interviews until you have a chance to access these resources.

7. *What are potential benefits of participation?* Sometimes people find participating in a focused conversation to be beneficial insofar as it gives them a chance to talk about things that matter to them. I hope the same will be true for you as well. Furthermore, I hope that being able to speak freely about your experiences may even bring about a new understanding and possibly resolution for long-standing issues that you have dealt with.
8. *What are my rights as a respondent?* You may ask any questions regarding the study, and I will attempt to answer them fully. You may withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason and without fear of negative consequences with me, the members of my team, or Chaminade University. Your participation is voluntary. If at any time, you would like to speak off the record, you may turn off the tape recorder, then turn the tape recorder back on only when you feel ready. Anything you discuss during this time will not be entered into the data unless you discuss them on the record at a later date. You may waive any question you do not wish to answer. You may also defer and answer the question at a later date. You have the right to review my work at any point in the process. After I have generated a narrative of what you have shared with me during the study, I will give you an opportunity to add, revise, and remove material you believe does not accurately represent your experiences.

On April 20, 2020, or when I have completed the requirements for my Clinical Research Project, I would like to return the tapes of our conversations to you. Please indicate which of the following you would like me to do at that time (please check all that apply):

- ☐ Please return my audio-recording(s) to me
- ☐ Please provide me with transcript(s)
- ☐ Please destroy my audio-recording(s)
- ☐ Please provide me with a copy of your Qualitative Clinical Research Project narrative write-up

9. *What will be published or presented anywhere?* As mentioned above, I would like to review narrative write-up of my findings with you during our last meeting. At that time, I will ask you for permission to use certain quotes from our conversations to illustrate your experiences more clearly to others. You have the right to review these materials and decide which quotes you will allow me to include in my final write up. You may also reword, add to, or decline my use of others. Because this is a Clinical Research Project, it is possible that it will be published, however, I will not include any quotes, phrases, or parts of your story that you wish to keep confidential.

10. *If I want more information, whom can I contact about the study?* If at any point in the study, you have questions about my study, you may contact me at 808-673-1653.

The instructor of my Clinical Research Project Chair Kathryn Chun, Ph.D., has reviewed this study. If at any time in the process you have concerns about my study, or interactions with you, or require clarification of your rights as a participant, you may contact her with your feedback, at her email: kathryn.chun@chaminade.edu.

By written notification to _____, below, I indicate that I am an adult (18 years or older), that the information presented in this document has been reviewed and explained to me to my satisfaction, but that this procedure does not preclude me from seeking further clarification of items in the future. I understand the nature and intent of this study. I also understand my rights and what is being asked of me as a participant. I understand all of the above and provisionally agree to the conditions specified. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to complete this informed consent procedure at the completion of my participation – after I have had a chance to review the materials that I have provided for this study. This will allow me to make any corrections, changes, or additions to the study's portrayal of my experiences. I understand that I still maintain the right to revoke this consent at any time during the study without cause.

Participant, please print name

Participant, please sign name

Date

Interviewer, please print name

Date

Interviewer, please sign name

D. Copy of Final Consent Form (Post-member check)**THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE ATTACHMENT
AFTER ATTACHMENT INJURY**

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University

Final Informed Consent and Release of Information form

I, _____, hereby authorize Kelsea Imose to submit the following
(participant)

information, collected in the course of my participation in the study indicated above, in partial fulfillment of her requirements for the Clinical Research Project and the Doctor of Psychology degree in Clinical Psychology, through the Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University. I hereby indicate that I have made the necessary corrections, additions, and retractions to my interview transcripts, and have reviewed the narrative and/or analysis of my story for accuracy.

I hereby authorize the use of these materials as part of Kelsea Imose's Clinical Research Project. I also authorize the use of the highlighted quotes in the final write-up to illustrate the perspectives/themes they are being used to represent.

My signature, below, indicates that I am an adult, 18 years of age or older. It indicates that the nature and intent of the study, as well as my rights as a participant, have been reviewed, again, so that I may refresh my memory of the issues reviewed in the original informed consent procedure. I have been informed that since this project is being conducted as part of a class, the provisional findings will not be published or presented in any professional forum. I understand the material reviewed and agree to the conditions specified now that I know what I am specifically contributing to the study. I have been informed that the tapes, transcripts, and analysis for this class project will be maintained until April 20, 2020 or until completion of the requirements for _____'s Clinical Research Project.

(interviewer)

Participant, please print name

Participant, please sign name

Date

Interviewer, please print name

Date

Interviewer, please sign name

E. Copy of Transcriptionist's Confidentiality Agreement

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE ATTACHMENT AFTER ATTACHMENT INJURY

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University

Confidentiality Agreement for Transcriptionist

As a member of Kelsea Imose's research team, one of my priorities is to uphold and protect the confidentiality of the participant in her study. The nature of the information in the audiotapes/transcripts may be personal and sensitive and must be kept confidential in order to protect the privacy of the participant. By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the importance of protecting the participant's confidentiality and agree to protect the information contained in audio recordings/transcripts, including the identity of the participant. The limits of confidentiality extend throughout the duration of the study and even after the study has been completed.

I, _____, have accepted the responsibilities of
(transcriptionist)
transcribing audio recordings for Kelsea Imose's research project. I understand that these audio recordings/transcripts contain personal and confidential information. I understand that during the course of the study, I will be provided with a thumb drive which I will use to store all transcriptions generated. While in my possession, I accept responsibility for keeping the documents provided, thumb drive, and transcriptions secure. I have been trained in the manner in which the tapes will be reviewed from and returned to above named researcher. No copies of the transcripts will be retained by me during or after the study. I understand the importance of keeping all audio recordings, transcripts, and the information contained in these documents secure and confidential. I will not release these tapes and transcripts to, and will not discuss their content with, anyone other than the researcher Kelsea Imose.

I have read the terms and conditions of confidentiality listed in this document. By signing this agreement, I agree to protect the identity of the participant(s) in this study. I also agree to keep all documents, audio recordings, and transcripts secure, and agree to protect the personal and sensitive information contained in these materials.

Transcriptionist, please print name

Transcriptionist, please sign name

Date

Researcher, please print name

Date

Researcher, please sign name

F. Copy of Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditor Confidentiality Agreement

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE ATTACHMENT AFTER ATTACHMENT INJURY

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University

Confidentiality Agreement for Peer Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditor

As a member of Kelsea Imose's research team, one of my priorities is to uphold and protect the confidentiality of the participant in his/her study. The nature of the information in the audio recordings/transcripts may be personal and sensitive and must be kept confidential in order to protect the privacy of the participant. By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the importance of protecting the participant's confidentiality and agree to protect the information contained in audio recordings/transcripts, including the identity of the participant. The limits of confidentiality extend throughout the duration of the study and even after the study has been completed.

I, _____, have accepted the responsibilities of
(Peer Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditor)
reviewing audio recordings and transcripts for Kelsea Imose's research project in order to fulfill my responsibilities as a member of her research team. I understand that these audio recordings and transcripts contain personal and confidential information. I understand that during the course of this study, I will be provided with either hard copies or a password protected data storage device containing transcripts or coded transcripts for review. While in my possession, I accept responsibility for keeping the documents secure. I have been trained in the manner in which the recordings will be reviewed from and returned to above named researcher. No copies of the transcripts will be retained by me during or after the study. I understand the importance of keeping all audio recordings, transcripts, and the information contained in these documents secure and confidential. I will not release these recordings and transcripts to, and will not discuss their content with, anyone other than the researcher,
Kelsea Imose.

I have read the terms and conditions of confidentiality listed in this document. By signing this agreement, I agree to protect the identity of the participant(s) in this study. I also agree to keep all documents, audio recordings, and transcripts secure, and agree to protect the personal and sensitive information contained in these materials.

Peer Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditor, please print name

Peer Debriefers/Peer Examiner/Auditor, please sign name

Date

Researcher, please print name

Date

Researcher, please sign name

G. Community Resource List (for Information and Referral, and Clinical Services)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECURE ATTACHMENT AFTER ATTACHMENT INJURY

Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology at Chaminade University

Community Resource List for Oahu, Hawai'i

As a researcher in the field of psychology, your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others is important to me. I encourage you to maintain communication with your personal mental health provider/team, and contact them should the need arise. I have also compiled a list of mental health centers with multiple providers and services, as well as the 24-hour crisis line, should you experience any feelings of distress, whether due to your participation in this study or otherwise.

Catholic Charities

1822 Keeaumoku St.
Honolulu, HI 96822
808-521-4357; 24-hour hotline: 808-527-4470

North Shore Mental Health

46-001 Kamehameha Hwy. #213
Kaneohe, HI 96744
808-235-1599

Child and Family Service

91-1841 Fort Weaver Rd.
Ewa Beach, HI 96706
808-681-3500 (for general information
regarding services)

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

55 Merchant St # 22
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-535-7600; 24-hour hotline: 808-
524-7273

Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center

1700 Lanikila Ave.
Honolulu, HI 96817
808-832-5770

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

86-260 Farrington Hwy.
Waianae, HI 96792
808- 697-3469

Mental Health Kokua

1221 Kapi'olani Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96814
808-737-2523

Waimanalo Health Center

41-1347 Kalaniana'ole Hwy.
Waimanalo, HI 96795
808-259-7948

O'ahu Community Mental Health Windward

45-691 Kea'ahala Rd.
Kaneohe, HI 96744
808-233-3775

Crisis Line:

You may call the 24-hour access line at **808-832-3100** on O'ahu, or toll free at **1-800-753-6879** for support at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

H. Integrated Coding Lists

CS: I CAN TRUST MYSELF

My Parents Abused Me

The Legacy of My Father: Guilt, Shame, Absence

My Relationship With my Father Was not Great

My Father Was Never Really Present in My Life

Everything Turned Around After One Specific Incident

My Dad and I Had an Alliance During My Teenage Years

He Will Never Admit that He Was Abusive Because He Does Not Believe It.

The Moth and the Butterfly: Good Mom Versus Bad Mom

All My Life, I Have Only Known Extremes

My Mom Was Never Safe for Me

I Repressed Things to Survive.

She Believed I Was Selfish

She Blamed Me for Everything

I Was the Reason She Hated My Father.

I Was the Reason for Her Abusive Behavior Toward Me.

I Was the Reason for Health Problems in the Family.

She Expected Me to Join Her in Her Hatred

She Was Painfully Particular—Almost Obsessive

She Never Stops!

She Refused to Acknowledge Her Downfalls

My Mother's Behavior Continues to Affect Me

I Played a lot of the Things I Have Had with Her Through My Ex.

Boundaries Keep Me from Getting Hurt.

She Tries to Fight My Boundaries.

We Are Not Doing This Anymore

Hitting Rock Bottom

Finding Intimacy with Myself

It Has Made Me Create More Trust Within Myself

This is the Healthiest Relationship I Have Had

The Relationship Is the Priority

Despite Differences, He Remains Engaged

He Is Willing to Spend Time to Resolve Conflicts

It Is Not About Understanding or Agreeing

He Tries to Understand What Is Behind My Anger

My Relationship with Him Has Helped Me to Heal

He Makes Me Feel Safe

We Are a Good Match

I Have Found Ways to Heal from My Pain

Yoga Has Given Me the Tools I Need to Connect with Myself

Confronting and Working Through What was not Mine

Reassurance Along the Way

I. Integrated Coding Lists**MONKEY4: I BECAME MORE INTENTIONAL****I Just Kept Going****Do You Care?****Her Boyfriends and Husbands Were Her Priority****She Was Always Busy with Work****I Needed More from Her****I Made Myself Not Need Her****My Dad Tried****He Was Disabled, So He Could Not Fully Be a Dad***He Made Sure I Was Safe**I Knew My Dad Cared***He Did A Better Job Than My Mom****I Found Ways to Survive****I Did What I Could to Feel Normal****Their Gifts Meant a Lot to Me****My Church Family Was There for Me***My Faith Helped Me to Heal**My Faith Guided Me in My Relationship***My Husband Became My Family***We Only Had Each Other**He Took Care of Me**I Took Care of Him*

We Are Very Committed to One Another

He is Different from My Parents.

Our Relationship Is Really Stable

It Is Give and Take

He's Very Receptive to My Needs.

I Try to Make the Best of It

My Parents Are Still Difficult

My Mom Wants to Spend Time with Me Now.

My Dad Wants to Be Taken Care of.

I've Used My Relationship with My Parents to Grow as a Person

I Learned from Their Mistakes.

Therapy Has Helped Me Gain Better Perspective

My Education in Psychology Helped Me Gain Better Perspective