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INTERNALIZED HOMONEGATIVITY AS A MODERATOR OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTNER ATTRIBUTIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
ABUSE AMONG MEN IN SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

by

Meghan L. Geiss

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Counseling Psychology

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Abstract

Geiss, Meghan Leigh. Ph.D. The University of Memphis. August 2013. Internalized homonegativity as a moderator of the relationship between partner attributions and psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships. Major Professor: Suzanne H. Lease, Ph.D.

Research examining factors associated with perpetration of Intimate Partner Psychological Abuse (IPPA) among men who have sex with men has been marginal in examining factors that may contribute to such experiences. Studies revealed internalized homonegativity (IH) as a factor associated with perpetration of IPPA (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Kelly & Warshasky, 1987). Internalized homonegativity is defined as the internalization of negative attitudes and messages about homosexuality by sexual minorities (Meyer, 1995). Research examining IPPA perpetration among heterosexual populations has revealed associations between relationship attributions of causality and responsibility and perpetration of IPPA (Copenhaver, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenbach, & Fruzzetti, 1992; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993; Scott & Straus, 2007), however this factor has yet to be examined using a sample of men in same-sex relationships. Relationship attributions refer to the tendency for humans to make designations in order to explain causes of events and the responsibility of behaviors of self and others (Heider, 1958). Relationship attributions of negative behavior include two dimensions, (a) causality and (b) responsibility. Relationship attributions of causality refer to the manner in which individuals ascribe explanations for their partners' negative behavior to internal, stable, and global causes. Relationship attributions of responsibility refer to the manner in which individuals place the accountability of their partners' negative behavior to intentional, purposeful, and self-focused motivations (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993). The current study investigated the possible

relationship of relationship attributions and IH in psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. It was hypothesized that relationship attributions of causality and responsibility and IH would significantly IPPA perpetration among men in same-sex relationships and that IH would be found to moderate the relationship between relationship attributions and perpetration of IPPA. The study examined responses from 345 participants from data originally collected in 2005. Of the 345 responses, 207 participants met criteria to be included in this study. A hierarchical regression showed that relationship attribution of causality significantly predicted perpetration of IPPA. Internalized homonegativity was not found to moderate the relationship between relationship attributions and perpetration of IPPA. Conclusions are presented along with recommendations for future research and implications for clinical practice are discussed. Keywords: psychological abuse, perpetration, same-sex, internalized homonegativity, relationship attributions, men

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Psychological abuse between intimate partners continues to be a pervasive social problem within the United States that has failed to receive extensive research attention, especially in relation to the disproportionate focus on physical abuse (Fritz & O’Leary, 2004; O’Leary, 1988). Matthew and colleagues’ (2008) nation-wide survey found that of 70,156 participants sampled, only 19.2% women and 8.7% men indicated no experience with psychological abuse from their romantic partners in their lifetimes. Approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men reported some form of intimate partner violence (IPV), including intimate partner psychological abuse (IPPA), in their lifetimes (Breiding, Black, & Ryan, 2008).

A common perception associated with IPV in society is physical aggression occurring among heterosexual couples, in which the male is the perpetrator and the female is a bruised and physically battered victim. Because of the narrow focus on physical abuse, society remains largely unaware that IPPA is a serious form of IPV that is consistently endorsed at similar to or higher rates than physical abuse, and is often a precursor to physical abuse (Murphy & O’Leary, 1989; O’Leary, 1988; Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). Moreover, IPPA has been shown to have as deleterious effects as physical abuse (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Marshall, 1992), including depression (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Cascardi, O’Leary, & Schlee, 1999; West, Fernandez, Hillard, Schoof, & Parks, 1990) and PTSD symptomatology (Krause, Kaltman, Goodman & Dutton, 2008; Street & Arias, 2001), the most prevalent mental-health sequelae of IPV. Similarly, several studies indicated the impact of psychological abuse on self-esteem and emotional health recovery

is sustained for longer periods of time and is more emotionally debilitating than immediate effects of physical abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1984).

While most of the research on IPV has been conducted with heterosexual couples, IPPA estimates among men who have sex with men (MSM) are comparable to those of their heterosexual counterparts, with rates ranging from 33% (Nieves-Rosa, Carballo-Diequez, & Dolezal, 2000) to 83% (Turrell, 2000). Similar to research with heterosexual partners, studies suggest that IPPA is the most commonly endorsed type of abuse within this population (Craft & Serovich, 2005; McClennen, Summers, & Vaughan, 2002; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Nieves-Rosa et al., 2000).

Examination of the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors related to perpetration of IPPA in all populations has been minimal. Even fewer studies have addressed factors associated with perpetration of IPPA among men who have sex with men (Bartholomew, Regan, Oram, & White, 2008; Craft & Serovich, 2005; Landolt & Dutton, 1997). Of the studies that examined perpetration of IPPA, Landolt and Dutton (1997) found a correlation between borderline personality traits and perpetration of IPPA, and Bartholomew and colleagues (2008) found that witnessing abuse in childhood and factors unique to sexual minority identities (i.e., internalized homonegativity) were associated with perpetration of IPPA among MSM. However, these studies sampled from single urban areas and did not explore other potential contributing factors of perpetration. The limited studies dedicated to examining perpetration of IPPA within same-sex relationships suggest there remains a great deal left unknown regarding this issue. By exploring the underlying factors that play a role in perpetration of IPPA, the scientific

field will hopefully expand the breadth of knowledge relating to this phenomenon to assist professionals who work with this population.

Although same-sex IPPA appears to mirror heterosexual IPPA in prevalence, there are social characteristics unique to sexual minorities to consider when examining both the impact of IPPA and the accuracy of reported abuse. Men who have sex with men face a complicated system of negative societal attitudes and stigma that renders them marginalized in a number of ways including: (1) a lack of civil rights; (2) societal oppression; (3) potential rejection by family of origin; (4) impaired self-concept due to anti-gay sentiment; and (5) vulnerability to hate crimes (Cooper, 1989). According to minority stress theory, stigmatized minority populations experience stress related to enduring systematic oppression by a majority culture that perceives the minority group as inferior (Meyer, 1995). Internalized homonegativity (IH), which is defined as the internalization of negative attitudes about homosexuality and sociocultural heteronormativity by gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) individuals (Baslam, 2001), can contribute to minority stress. Men who have sex with men are at risk for this type of stress (e.g., internalized homonegativity) due to being sexual minorities.

The impact of IH among sexual minorities has been extensively studied and has consistently been found to be a negative predictor of many deleterious effects including body dissatisfaction (Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005), demoralization (Herek, Cogan, Gillis & Glunt, 1998), and suicidal ideation and behavior (Meyer, 1995). Both qualitative (Cody & Welch, 1997) and quantitative studies (Allen & Oleson, 1999; Meyer, 1995) of IH within samples of men who have sex with men found that many participants reported feeling a deep sense of both shame and guilt related to their sexual orientation.

Internalized homonegativity has been identified as a related factor to perpetration of IPPA in same-sex relationships (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Hamilton, 2005; Kelly & Warshasky, 1987). For example, among women who have sex with women, IH had a positive relationship with both perpetration of physical and psychological abuse (Hamilton, 2005).

In addition, the cognitive aspect of attachment theory, specifically relationship attribution, and its relationship to IH has yet to be explored with a sample of men in same-sex relationships. Men who have sex with men who develop insecure attachments may be likely to make attributions about their intimate partners' negative behavior. For men who have sex with men, this tendency may be amplified if they also experience stress in the form of internalized homonegativity. One possible explanation for the association between internalized homonegativity and IPPA is that the internalized homonegativity experienced by a partner may be projected onto the other via attributions of causality and responsibility, increasing the likelihood of perpetration of IPPA. A commonly experienced emotion related to IH includes a deep sense of shame regarding one's sexual orientation (Cody & Welch, 1997). Shame can be understood as a negative global sense of self where in the event that something bad occurs, it is experienced as a reflection of the negative self that results in self-criticism. Shame is also said to involve a certain level of felt vulnerability to exposure to others who are perceived to be rejecting or serve as reflecting boards of the negative self. It is also theorized that shame-ridden individuals will go to great lengths to avoid any reminders of their felt shame (including projection and blaming attributional tendencies; Tangey, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992).

Lewis (1971) was one of the first to suggest and study the possible connection between shame and the projection of anger by way of verbal aggression. Lewis purported that one's initial reaction to a felt sense of shame would result in self-directed hostility. However, given the perceived sense of judgment from "rejecting others" (individuals whom the shamed individual perceives as potentially rejecting of the "bad self" and/or who poses as a reminder of the "bad self"), Lewis theorized the hostility originally directed at one's self can be easily redirected and projected onto to the "rejecting other" as a defense against the felt sense of negative self. In other words, it is possible that an individual who experiences a deep sense of being innately bad will project hostility towards self onto those that they feel will reject them for being innately bad and/or will force them to experience the shame of being innately bad. By analyzing hundreds of psychotherapy session transcripts, Lewis uncovered a pattern of shame felt by the client followed by verbal aggression towards the therapist. Harper and colleagues' (2005) study also supported this theory, indicating a significant relationship between shame and perpetration of IPPA among heterosexual men. Therefore, it is possible that men in same-sex relationships who experience high levels of IH (experience negative sense of self) may project their hostility towards self onto their same-sex partner (by perpetrating IPPA) in order to defend against the image of a negative self.

Working Models of Attachment and Relationship Attributions

Working models of attachment theory have also been proposed as a conceptual framework for understanding the interpersonal dynamics in IPPA (Collins, 1996; Dutton, 1995; Fonagy, 1999; Mayseless, 1991). Working models are the internal cognitive-affective representations that individuals develop about the world and self. During

childhood these representations, or schemata, are created as attempts to gain feelings of safety and security and are determined by the caregiver's emotional availability and responsiveness to the child's needs. Throughout one's development, these working models or beliefs about others' emotional responsiveness will generalize to other interpersonal relationships, and once solidified will be used to evaluate, predict and interpret the behavior of others.

There are said to be two types of working models of attachment: secure and insecure. Secure working models of attachment reflect cognitive flexibility that allows individuals to maintain positive images of both their partners and themselves. Conversely, insecure working models represent cognitive vulnerability that predisposes individuals to construe their relationship experiences more harshly. As a consequence of having the tendency to interpret themselves or their partners in a negative manner, insecurely attached individuals are more likely to experience emotional distress and make unhealthy behavioral choices that play a role in producing poor relationship outcomes (Collins, Ford, Guichard, & Allard, 2006; Collins & Read, 1994).

Insecure relationship attachment is considered to have three dimensions, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and anxious-avoidant (Ainsworth, 1982; Collins & Read, 1994; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and is consistently related to perpetration of IPPA (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Hamilton, 2005; Henderson, Bartholomew, Trinke, & Kwong, 2005). Specifically, Bartholomew and colleagues (2008) reported that attachment anxiety was correlated with perpetration of both physical and psychological intimate abuse in their sample of men who have sex with men. In addition, studies with heterosexual samples have reported that those who have either an

anxious or avoidant insecure attachment style tend to construct attributions regarding their partners' negative behavior (Collins, 1996; Fincham & Bradbury, 1992; Mikulincer, 1998).

According to attribution theory, humans tend to make designations in order to explain causes of events and behaviors of self and others (Hider, 1958). Relationship attributions are therefore the manifestation of these designations within the context of an intimate partner relationship. Relationship attributions specifically refer to the manner in which an individual ascribes meaning to the negative behavior(s) of his partner within the relationship. Fincham and Bradbury (1992) theorized that there are two dimensions of relationship attributions for negative behaviors including attributions of causality (explanations of behavior) and responsibility (accountability of behavior). An individual who possesses relationship attributions of causality is said to attribute his partner's negative behavior within the relationship to internal (due to something that is innate within the partner), stable (due to something that is constant within the partner), and global (the behavior applies to other factors of the partner) explanations. An individual who holds relationship attributions of responsibility is said to perceive his partner's negative behavior as intentional (purposeful), motivated by the self-interest and blameworthy of the partner.

Research shows a relationship between attributions for negative partner behavior and perpetration of IPPA (Dutton & Starzomski, 1993). Specifically, Dutton and Starzomski (1993) found that the attribution of blame was strongly associated with men's emotional abuse of their partners within their heterosexual sample. It has been shown in IPV research that perpetrators of IPPA tend to negatively attribute their partners'

nonviolent, negative behaviors to their partners' negative intentions, selfish motivation, and blameworthiness (Copenhaver, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993; Scott & Strauss, 2007). There is some evidence suggesting that attributions may be an important aspect of IPPA for men in same-sex relationships. To date, no research has been conducted on the role of attributions in psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships and if attributions are linked in the same way for men in same-sex relationships as they are for heterosexual couples. Therefore, the focus of this current study is designed to examine the potential moderating effect of internalized homonegativity on the relationship between partner attributions and perpetration of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that IPPA occurs within male same-sex relationships (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Craft & Serovich, 2005; Landolt & Dutton, 1997; McClennen et al., 2002; Merrill & Wolf, 2000; Nieves-Rosa, Carballo-Diéguez, & Dolezal, 2000; Toro-Alfonso & Rodriguez-Madera, 2004). However, there remains a void in the literature that addresses predictors of psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. Specifically, there are currently no studies that examine IH as a potential moderator of the relationship between relationship attribution and perpetration of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships. Obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the factors underlying the perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships would permit a better determination of appropriate services for these individuals to contribute to the prevention of IPPA perpetration from the outset.

Purpose of Study

This study will explore the relationship of relationship attributions and internalized homonegativity in psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. Although few studies have been conducted regarding perpetration of IPPA among men who have sex with men, existing studies of heterosexual relationship violence will serve as a starting point for exploratory research. The present study focuses on predictors of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships with particular emphasis on relationship attributions and how internalized homonegativity might affect the association of attributions and IPPA perpetration in a sample of men in same-sex relationships. It is possible that IH may strengthen the relationship between relationship attributions of responsibility and causality for partner negative behavior and perpetration of psychological abuse as the negative feelings about self are attributed to the partner (see Figure 1).

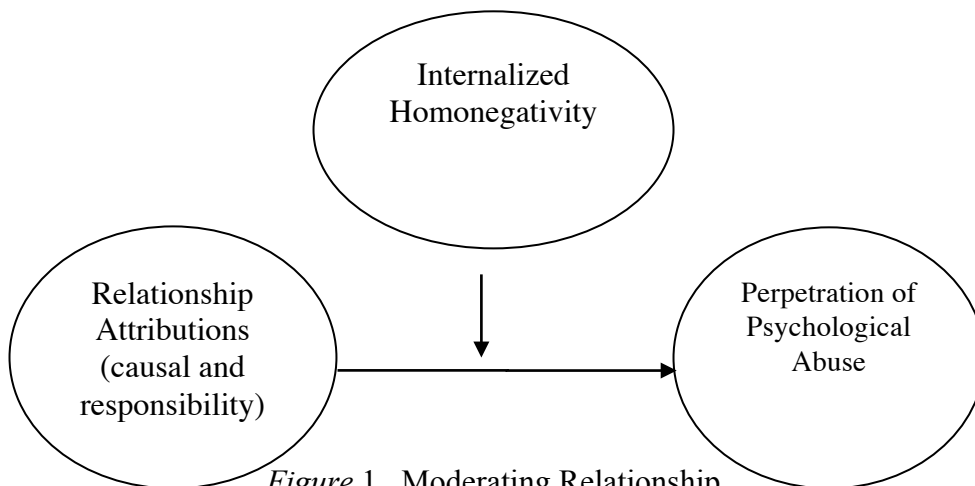


Figure 1. Moderating Relationship

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1) Do relationship attributions for partner negative behavior and internalized homonegativity significantly predict and contribute meaningful variance of psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships?

2) Does internalized homonegativity moderate the association between relationship attributions for partner negative behavior and perpetration of psychological abuse?

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that relationship attributions and internalized homonegativity will significantly predict psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. It is also expected that internalized homonegativity will moderate the relationships between relationship attributions (causality and responsibility dimensions) for partner negative behavior and perpetration of psychological abuse so that these relationships will be stronger for individuals with higher levels of internalized homonegativity.

Definition of Terms

Relationship attributions. Relationship attributions refer to the ascriptions that humans apply to the events that occur in their intimate relationships (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991).

Psychological abuse. Psychological abuse is defined as the use of words or actions to isolate, humiliate, demean, intimidate, or control an intimate partner. This category often includes property violence such as punching holes in walls, breaking down doors, throwing things, and damaging a partner's possessions. These behaviors are intimidating, but do not involve the direct use of physical force against the partner (Burke & Follingstad, 1999).

Same-Sex intimate partner violence. Renzetti (1998) defines same-sex IPV as a pattern of violent and/or coercive behaviors for which an individual attempts to control the thoughts, beliefs, or conduct of her or his intimate same-sex partner or to punish the intimate same-sex partner for resisting the perpetrator's control.

Internalized homonegativity. Internalized homonegativity is defined as the internalization of negative attitudes and messages about homosexuality by gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (Meyer, 1995).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following review of the literature will offer a brief overview of research findings regarding IPPA of men who have sex with men. Subsequently, attachment theory will be discussed to enhance understanding of IPPA with specific focus on how the variables of internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions are related to perpetration of IPPA.

Same-Sex Intimate Partner Psychological Abuse

In the past two decades there has been an increase in studies examining IPPA within same-sex relationships. Based on descriptive data from numerous studies (e.g., Turrell, 2000), the rates of IPPA in same-sex relationships of men are estimated to be approximately equal to heterosexual couples and are consistently reported at the highest rate for types of abuse experienced among men who have sex with men. Rates of IPPA among MSM have been estimated as low as 33% (Nieves-Rosa et al., 2000) and as high as 83% (Turrell, 2000). In a study examining the association between relationship power dynamics and the perpetration of psychological abuse in a sample of 52 men in same-sex relationships, Landolt and Dutton (1997) found a 40% incidence of at least one member of the couple perpetrating one or more psychologically abusive acts within the past year. Burke, Jordan, and Owen (2002) found within their community sample of 56 MSM that 28% indicated receiving threats; 40% verbal abuse; and 40% control and/or prevention of making social contacts by their same-sex partner. Finally, Greenwood and colleagues (2002) sampled 2,881 men with same-sex sexual experience or gay/bi-identification

about the incidence of psychological abuse over the span of a five-year study. They found that 34% experienced psychological/symbolic abuse.

Moreover, Merrill and Wolfe's (2000) study exploring the experiences of battered men who have sex with men revealed that 60-94% of the sample indicated experiencing some form of emotional abuse versus the 42-79% of those who indicated experiencing physical abuse perpetrated by their partner. In a study examining relationship dynamics, help-seeking behaviors, and correlates of IPPA among men who have sex with men, 62% of participants sampled reported experiencing psychological abuse in contrast to the 48% who indicated receiving physical abuse (McClennen et al., 2002). Lastly, Craft and Serovich (2005) conducted an exploratory study examining the prevalence of IPPA in a sample of men who have sex with men and were HIV positive. Their findings indicated that both perpetration and receipt of psychological abuse were the most commonly reported forms of violence within the sample (78.4%-72.5%, respectively) (Craft & Serovich, 2005).

These studies indicate substantial rates of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships with evidence of consistently higher rates of psychological abuse compared to other forms of abuse (Craft & Serovich, 2005; McClennen et al., 2002; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Although IPPA is a very real issue within same-sex relationships of men, there remains a lack of research studying perpetration of psychological abuse and specifically the variables that increase the potential for abuse. Although it is probable that variables predictive of IPPA in heterosexual couples are also predictive in male same-sex couples, there may be variables specific to a sexual minority status that also increase the potential for IPPA. Further investigation into correlates of IPPA would help

to better understand how to conceptualize and treat this pervasive social issue within this population. This study was designed to examine these factors.

Impactful Factors for Men in Same-Sex Relationships

Despite the numbers presented above, there are potential factors that may result in underrepresentation of men who have sex with men in IPPA research. Attention to IPV was first brought about in the 1970s as part of the women's movement underlined by second wave feminist principles with a strong emphasis on males being the "batterers" and females being the "victims" (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). The initial studies examining IPV outside of heterosexual relationships focused primarily on women in same-sex relationships. This explicit focus is congruent with the principles reflected in feminist theory, particularly the belief that women represent the "victims" in same-sex violence (Letellier, 1994). However, man as victim, does not fit the abuser-victim paradigm.

Another possibility for the lack of research dedicated to IPPA among men who have sex with men might be related to the reality that there are other, more pressing, health issues specific to the population such as HIV/AIDS (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). IPPA has been identified as a serious health issue facing men who have sex with men today, but HIV/AIDS remains the main priority. Although the abundant focus and research dedicated to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention is both warranted and necessary, it may pull attention away from the other presenting health issues among men in same-sex relationships, including IPPA (Singer & Deschamps, 1994).

It has also been suggested that scholars of GLB research may shy away from documenting intra-community problems, such as IPPA, in order to prevent the promotion

of negative stereotypes of the GLB community (Merill & Wolfe, 2000). These concerns are valid in that studies indicate heterosexual individuals tend to hold negative attitudes toward gay men in general. These studies also revealed that when compared to women who have sex with women, men who have sex with men are more likely to be negatively perceived, specifically by heterosexual men (Hicks & Lee, 2006; Ratcliff, Lassiter, Markman, & Snyder, 2006).

In line with Merill and Wolfe's (2000) reasoning, the current political climate is arguably contributing to the hesitancy of researchers to reveal and explore issues of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships. Legal rights and issues surrounding sexual minorities (e.g., Gay Marriage, Adoption Rights) are currently being argued throughout the U.S. courts on both a state and federal level. GLB individuals' suitability to be competent parents and whether they are deserving of equal marriage rights to their heterosexual counterparts are in dispute. Therefore, researchers of IPPA among MSM could risk inadvertently providing ammunition for those who oppose gay rights.

Attachment Style as an Underlying Precursor of IPPA

Attachment orientation has been found to be significantly correlated to IPPA in both heterosexual (e.g., Bartholomew & Allison, 2006) and same-sex relationships (e.g., Bartholomew et al., 2008). According to attachment theory, humans are goal-directed with basic relational needs to form strong emotional bonds with a predictable attachment figure that provides security, protection, and intimacy (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment orientation is the type and quality of attachment that individuals develop with their caregivers. Securely attached children will feel safe, warm, and cared for by their caregivers as a consequence of their caregivers' attentiveness to the children's needs.

Conversely, insecurely attached children will feel scared or emotionally detached from their caregivers as a consequence of the caregivers' neglectful and/or unhealthy interactions with the children (Bowlby, 1980).

Although attachment theory was first developed looking at infants, it is suggested that attachment style continues throughout one's lifespan and plays a role in the intimate relationships established in adulthood (Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). If children develop secure attachments with their caregivers during childhood, then they are predicted to have a strong sense of safety and security in their senses of self, therefore allowing them to form healthy and secure attachments with others during adulthood. On the other hand, if they develop an insecure attachment style, they are more likely to face tremendous difficulty in forming healthy and meaningful relationships with others on an intimate level (Bowlby, 1988).

Contemporary attachment theorists expanded on Bowlby's work by conceptualizing working models of attachment theory (e.g., Collins, 1996). Working models of attachment theory suggest that the cognitive-affective representations that individuals develop about the world and self (working models) are a direct result from childhood attachments with primary caregivers. These working models or beliefs about others' emotional responsiveness develop throughout one's life and will generalize to other interpersonal relationships throughout adulthood, including romantic partners. As working models become more crystallized through one's life, they will be utilized to assess, predict, and interpret the behaviors of others as they become more crystallized (Collins & Read, 1994).

Working models of attachment are theorized to be either secure or insecure in nature, with secure working models of attachment reflecting cognitive flexibility that allows an individual to maintain positive images of self and partner, whereas insecure working models represent cognitive vulnerability that predisposes individuals to judge their partners and selves in a critical manner. In other words, individuals who have developed insecure working models of attachment experience a deep sense of “bad self” and maintain a schemata of “bad others” in their adult romantic relationships. As a consequence of having a negative sense of self and others, insecurely attached individuals are said to be more likely to experience emotional distress and make unhealthy behavioral choices (i.e., perpetration of IPPA) that play a role in producing poor relationship outcomes (Collins et al., 2006; Collins & Read, 1994).

Associations between attachment anxiety and perpetration of IPPA in heterosexual relationships have been documented for men and women in community and clinical samples (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006; Mahalik, Aldarondo, Gilbert-Gokhale, & Shore, 2005; Rankin, Saunders, & Williams, 2000). Specifically these studies indicated that men who perpetrated IPPA tended to have more insecure styles of attachment than non-abusive men. Even though there are limited studies dedicated to examining attachment as a predictor in same-sex IPPA, the few studies that do exist are consistent with the findings in heterosexual research (Bartholomew et al., 2008; Hamilton, 2005; Landolt & Dutton, 1997). Landolt and Dutton’s (1997) study indicated that fearful and preoccupied attachment predicted perpetration of psychological abuse within their sample of 52 men who have sex with men living in an urban area. Similarly,

Bartholomew et al.'s (2008) study with a sample of MSM in an urban area found anxious attachment orientation to be associated with bidirectional partner abuse.

Men in same-sex relationships might be particularly vulnerable to experiencing intensified feelings of anxious attachment based on the reality that they may be heavily reliant on the gay community for social support and risk losing the majority of their support if they choose to seek help regarding their IPPA issues. Moreover, it is possible that this fear would be exacerbated for perpetrators of abuse in comparison to recipients of abuse in that the fear of losing support due to being labeled an "abuser" may be more probable than if labeled a "victim." This may deter MSM perpetrators of IPPA from reaching out to their support systems, therefore increasing their vulnerability to continue the abusive behavior.

One of the components of the working models of attachment includes the cognitive views of others as good or bad. Those models of the 'other' guide an individual's interpretation of events that occur within their adult romantic relationships. Studies with heterosexual samples offer support for this concept indicating that those who have either an anxious or avoidant insecure attachment style tend to construct attributions regarding their partners' negative behaviors (Collins, 1996; Fincham & Bradbury, 1992; Mikulincer, 1998).

The negative views of the 'other' that characterize insecure attachment might also be viewed through the perspective of the defense mechanism of projection (Mikulincer & Horesh, 1999; Starzomski & Dutton, 1994). Projection can be defined as the ascription of unconscious negative feelings and/or beliefs about the self onto another person or object in attempt to avoid the pain of consciously admitting personal faults such

as shame (Lewis, 1971). In a study examining attachment style differences in the perception of others and potential projective mechanisms underlying these differences, Mikulincer and Horesh (1999) found that anxious-ambivalent persons' inferences about others reflected the projection of their actual-self-traits, whereas anxious avoidant persons' responses reflected the projection of their unwanted-self-traits. Starzomski and Dutton (1994) found within their sample of heterosexual men that scores on insecure attachment were significantly associated with the measures of the tendency to split women into ideal and devalued objects and to project angry impulses onto the devalued women-object through the of perpetration of emotional abuse. Therefore, men in same-sex relationship who have developed insecure working models of attachment may be more likely to attribute negative aspects of their own behavior within the relationship to their partners. It is also possible for men in this population who experience a deep felt sense of the negative self to project their hostility towards self onto their partners. Thus, attachment theory might provide the framework for the views and attributions one makes about one's partner.

Predictors of Domestic Violence

Relationship attribution. Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) suggests that humans tend to make attributions in order to explain causes of events and behaviors of self and others. Heider also purported that persons' attributions are affected by whether or not they like the attribution target, indicating that individuals will tend to attribute negatively to those they dislike and attribute positively for those they like. The attributions that humans construct can also be influenced by culture and environmental factors. For example, studies have revealed that individuals from collectivist cultures

tend to attribute negative events to situational factors (factors external to an individual) as opposed to those from individualist cultures who tend to attribute negative events to dispositional factors (innate characteristics of an individual) (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2010).

Attributions about relationship partners' negative behavior can reflect an individual's perception that his partner's negative behavior is *internal* (due to something that occurs within the partner), *stable* (something that is unchangeable), *global* (applies to other factors of the partner), and *intentional* (the partner is acting purposefully) (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992). Attributions for negative behaviors are also theorized to reflect the degree to which an individual views his partner's behavior as *selfish* in motivation and *blameworthy* (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992). Thus, attributions can be thought of as reflecting ideas of cause and responsibility. In other words, causal attributions in relationships are the explanations a partner generates for the actions of his significant other. While responsibility attributions are a partner's accountability or answerability for an event (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990).

Research examining relationship attribution in relation to IPPA has emerged within the past 20 years. Findings suggest that psychologically abusive spouses are more likely to attribute causality of negative partner behaviors to their spouses and attribute greater responsibility to their partners for negative events that occur within the relationships than do non-abusive spouses (Copenhaver, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenbach, & Fruzzetti, 1992; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993; Scott & Straus, 2007). Specifically, in a study examining the associations between self-reported minimizing and blaming attributions and the perpetration of physical, sexual,

and psychological aggression against an intimate partner using a sample of 139 heterosexual male and females, Scott and Straus (2007) found a correlation between partner blaming and perpetration of IPPA for both sexes. This relationship remained significant even after controlling for social desirability and relationship distress.

Similarly, Copenhaver's (2000) study of 57 males in heterosexual relationships tested the hypothesis that compared to non-abusive men, abusive men (including perpetrators of physical, sexual, and/or psychological aggressions) would attribute greater negative intent and responsibility to their partners. As predicted, the study found that men characterized as abusive tended to attribute significantly greater negative intent and responsibility to their partners than did those characterized as non-abusive. Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson (1993) compared relationship attributions for non-abusive, negative behavior offered by three groups of male spouses in heterosexual marriages including 22 maritally abusive and distressed, 17 nonviolent but maritally distressed, and 17 nonviolent and nondistressed. They measured violence with the Straus' (1979) Conflict Tactics (CT) scale that included items for both verbal and physical forms of abuse perpetration. They found on measures of responsibility and intention attributions, that abusive husbands were more likely than non-abusive husbands to attribute negative intentions, selfish motivation, and blameworthiness to their wives (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993).

Lastly, in a study examining personality predictors of power and control, Dutton and Starzomski (1997) found that blaming was strongly associated with men's emotional abuse of their partners. Worth noting is that some research indicates that men, in comparison to women, are more likely to deny responsibility and to place blame on the

victim for perpetrating abuse (Bryant & Spencer, 2003; LeJune & Follette, 1994).

Therefore, men in same-sex relationships may be more likely to endorse maladaptive attributions to relationship events as compared to heterosexual and lesbian women.

Unfortunately, all research examining relationship attribution as a factor of IPPA has focused exclusively on heterosexual couples. However, relationship attribution might be a factor of IPPA within coupled men in same-sex relationships as well.

Internalized homonegativity. Theory and research on heterosexual abuse may inform the study of same-sex IPPA, however theorists argue that it is important to incorporate factors that are unique to the experiences of individuals in same-sex relationships (e.g., Renzetti, 1997). Internalized homonegativity is a factor unique to the GLB population that has been associated with the perpetration of IPPA within same-sex relationships. Negative societal messages toward homosexuality can make it difficult to develop a positive and healthy identity for men who have sex with men. Internalized homonegativity (IH) refers to the internalization of these negative attitudes on sexual minorities (Meyer, 1995). The construct of IH originally stemmed from an elaboration on Brooks' (1981) minority stress theory that suggested that psychosocial stress occurs for individuals that are members of a minority group that faces multiple societal oppressions. Although Brooks' theory was initially applied to ethnic minorities as the experience of chronic stressors (e.g., low SES, prejudice, etc.) that can result in negative health outcomes, the theory was later used by Meyer (1995) to further understand the experiences of sexual minorities. Meyer (1995) suggested that GLB individuals experience the stigma of being non-heterosexual in a heterosexual society in defensive

reactions that are expressed either externally or internally (e.g., internalized homonegativity).

Research has found associations between IH and numerous negative health outcomes for sexual minorities including depression (Cox, Vanden Berghe, Dewaele, & Vincke, 2008), self-esteem issues, and overall psychological distress (Meyer, 1995; Shidlo, 1994; Vanden Berghe, Dewaele, Cox, & Vincke, 2010). Meyer (1995) provided evidence for his theory with a longitudinal study examining the potential effects on psychological distress levels from minority stress as men who have sex with men experience it. He sampled 741 MSM who were living in New York City and did not have a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS as of 1985 and found that among other stressors, IH was significantly associated with a variety of mental health measures. Cox and colleagues' (2008) study used a sample of 2,280 GLB individuals (715 females, 1,565 males) to examine the contributing factors of mental health on sexual minorities and found internalized homonegativity had a significant relationship with depressive outcomes. A study examining the relationship between homonegativity, racism, and poverty and HIV-risk-related behavior among Latino gay and bisexual men found that greater experiences of homonegativity predicted negative health behaviors of unprotected receptive anal intercourse and unprotected sex under the influence of drugs among the sampled population (Nakamura & Zea, 2010). Symanski and Gupta (2009) examined the relationships between multiple external and internalized oppressions and sexual minority individuals' psychological distress among Asian American GLB persons. They found that higher levels of racist events, heterosexist events, internalized racism, and

internalized homonegativity were each related to more psychological distress, with internalized homonegativity as a unique predictor of psychological stress.

Similarly, one study investigated the influence of psychological factors such as internalized homonegativity, an exploration phase sexual identity, and the importance of race/ethnicity to self-concept on African American MSM's use of a behavioral escape avoidance response when they were reminded of their double minority group status (Tucker-Seeley, Blow, Matsuo, & Taylor-Moore, 2010). Evidence showed that the men with higher internalized homonegativity and exploration phase sexual identity were more likely to endorse the behavioral escape avoidance response than men with lower internalized homonegativity and lower exploration phase sexual identity. A study evaluating associations between unrecognized HIV infection and demographic factors including internalized homonegativity, drug use, and sexual behaviors among HIV positive MSM showed that compared to HIV positive participants who correctly reported their HIV positive status, having higher homonegativity scores was associated with unrecognized HIV infection (Young et al., 2009). Newcomb and Mustanski (2010) utilized 31 studies for their meta-analysis that looked at the relationship between internalized homonegativity and mental health. Their analysis revealed that higher levels of IH were associated with higher scores on dimensional measures of internalizing mental health problems. In addition, the relationship between IH and internalizing mental health problems was stronger in participants with a higher mean age.

Internalized homonegativity has been found to be associated with perpetration of IPPA in women's same-sex relationships (Balsam, Szymanski, & Nilsen, 2002; Hamilton, 2005). Bartholomew and colleagues (2008) is currently the only study that examined IH

in relation to perpetration of IPPA among men who have sex with men. Their study found a direct relationship between IH and perpetration of psychological and physical abuse, but not with the experience of abuse. Internalized homonegativity has yet to receive research attention as a possible moderating factor for any condition, however, examining the possible impact of IH on the relationship between relationship attributions and perpetration of abuse is logical. Specifically, given that IH speaks to the manner in which an individual experiences an internalized message of being innately wrong (global belief of a negative self pertaining to same-sex orientation), the relationship between the constructs of relationship attributions (global belief of partner) and perpetration of abuse may be influenced with varying levels of IH (i.e., if I feel like I'm a bad person because I am gay then I am more likely to have negative beliefs about my partner because he is also gay, therefore increasing my chances of perpetration psychological abuse). Currently, there are no studies examining internalized homonegativity as a predictor of perpetration of psychological abuse and as a possible moderator of the relationship between relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships using a sample from the U.S.

Summary

To date, research examining IPV among men in same-sex relationships has focused almost exclusively on descriptive and exploratory analysis with emphasis on victimization and physical aggression. Studies examining perpetration of psychological abuse are lacking in IPV research in general, but are particularly scarce within the population of men in same-sex relationships. There are currently no other studies that have explored the role of relationship attribution as a possible predictor of psychological

abuse among men in same-sex relationships. This study examined predictors of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships with particular emphasis on relationship attributions and how internalized homonegativity might affect the association of attributions and abuse in a sample of men in same-sex relationships.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

This study was conducted using archival data from an internet-based survey investigating work and relationship experiences of men in same-sex relationships. The participants were recruited through a number of gay-affirming listservs, bulletin boards, and websites. In addition, the snowball method was employed, and participants were encouraged to inform and ask their friends and partners to participate in the survey. Participation was anonymous. In order to participate, participants had to self-identify as gay or bisexual men and be in a same-sex relationship of at least six months duration. The original sample for this study consisted of 345 respondents, however, 207 participants met criteria for inclusion in the present study. The criteria included completing all items of the three measures (CTS-2, RAM, Shidlo) utilized in this study.

This sample was composed of men who identified as gay or homosexual (96.1%, $n = 199$) and bisexual (3.9%, $n = 8$). The sample was primarily Caucasian (87%, $n = 180$), with other participants identifying as African American (3.4%, $n = 7$), Asian/Pacific American (1%, $n = 2$), Bi / Multiracial (1.9%, $n = 4$), Latino (1.9%, $n = 4$), and Native American (1.9%, $n = 4$). The mean age of the sample was 38.87. See Table 1 for additional descriptive information.

Table 1

Descriptive Information (N=207)

	N	%
Race/Ethnicity		
Native American	4	1.9
Asian/Pacific American	2	1
African-American	7	3.4
Latino	4	1.9
White	180	87
Bi/Multiracial	4	1.9
Educational Background		
Some High School	1	.5
HS Diploma	9	4.3
Voc/Tech School	5	2.4
Some College	53	25.6
College Degree	66	31.9
Master's Degree	41	19.8
Doctoral Degree	20	9.7
Other	12	5.8

(Table 1 continues)

Table 1 (continued)

	N	%
Personal Income		
Not Employed	5	2.4
Not Employed (Student)	4	1.9
< 10,000	5	2.4
10,000-20,000	18	8.7
20,001-30,000	29	14.1
30,001-40,000	30	14.6
40,001-50,000	24	11.7
50,001-60,000	26	12.6
60,001-70,000	12	5.8
70,001-80,000	12	5.8
80,001-90,000	7	3.4
90,001-100,000	3	1.4
100,001-200,000	27	13
200,001-300,000	4	1.9

Measures

For the purposes of the current study, the following measures were used: The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2), The Revised (Shidlo) Nungesser Homosexuality Attitudes Inventory, and The Relationship Attribution Measure (RAM).

The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale Version 2 (CTS-2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996) was used to assess prevalence and frequency of perpetration

of IPPA as it occurred within the current relationships as reported by the participants. For the purposes of the present study, only data from the psychological abuse/aggression scale were utilized. The psychological abuse/aggression subscale consists of 8 items that assess for present perpetration of psychological abuse. Each question was asked pertaining to the participant's current partner, for instance "I insulted or swore at my partner" or "I shouted or yelled at my current partner." The participants were asked to rate each question by answering either 0 times, 1-2 times, or 3 or more times as to whether the statement was true for his relationship in the past year, and to indicate how many times it occurred in the past year.

For the purposes of this study, scoring for the psychological abuse/aggression subscale included the sum of 8 scores. Items endorsed with the answer "0 times" to indicate no violence were given a score of 0. For items endorsed by participants as "yes" for "1-2 times" or "3 + times," a score of 1 was designated. Scores for the subscale ranged from 0 to 8 with a score of 8 indicating that all forms of current psychological abuse perpetration were endorsed and 0 indicating that no forms of current psychological abuse perpetration were endorsed. The psychological aggression subscale had a reported internal consistency reliability of .79 (Straus et al., 1996). Straus et al. (1996) used a sample of adult, heterosexual individuals that were dating, cohabiting, or in a marital relationship of at least 1 month duration during the year prior to the study. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the psychological aggression subscale (perpetration of psychological abuse with current partner) for the current study was .75.

The *Revised (Shidlo) Nungesser Homosexuality Attitudes Inventory* (Shidlo, 1994) was used to assess internalized homonegativity. The 15-item subscale Self (Personal

Homonegativity) was used for this study. The Self-subscale consists of questions such as “When I am in conversation with someone that is GLBT and they touch me, it does not make me uncomfortable” (reversed scored) and “Whenever I think a lot about being gay, I feel depressed.” It includes a 4-point Likert type scale that allows participant responses ranging from (1) “Strongly disagree” to (2) “Strongly agree.” Scores for the scale were established by summing the items on the scale with higher scores indicating higher degrees of internalized homonegativity. Scores range from 15 to 60. Previous studies using this dataset revealed a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .77 (Hamilton, 2005). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the total IH scale in this study was .75.

The *Relationship Attribution Measure (RAM)* (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992) was used to measure the degree of adaptive versus maladaptive attributions made by the participants within their relationships. The measure consists of hypothetical situations common to marital relationships that the participants imagine and then respond, for each situation, to six statements on a Likert-type scale ranging from “Disagree Strongly” (1) to “Agree Strongly” (6). The statements were designed to access different dimensions of the attributional process, such as whether the actor should be blamed for his behavior or if the cause of the behavior was stable within the actor, like a personality trait, or caused by temporary factors, such as stress or being in a bad mood. For example, a participant would respond to the statement: “The reason my partner spends less time with me is not likely to change” in reference to the hypothetical situation: “your partner begins to spend less time with you.”

The RAM was scored on two different dimensions, the Causality dimension and the Responsibility dimension; each dimension is composed of the scores of three

questions. The first set of three items assesses attributions of causality, which include locus (internal), stability (unchangeable), and globality (applies to other elements of partner). The causality dimension is composed of attributions that serve as explanations for the negative event. Higher scores on causality indicate higher levels of partner attributions of negative events to internal and unchangeable characteristics of their partner; in addition higher scores indicate these behaviors are believed to manifest in other negative behaviors of the partner. The second set of three items assesses attributions of responsibility, which include intentionality (purposeful), motivation (selfish), and personal responsibility (blameworthy). The responsibility dimension is an aggregate of attributions that presuppose a causal attribution and concern an individual's accountability for the negative event. Scoring for each of the two subscales (causal attribution and responsibility attribution) have score ranges from 12 to 72 for each domain. Higher responsibility scores reflect more partner attributions of bad intent, selfish motivation, and responsibility. Previous studies using this dataset showed internal reliability for the causality and responsibility dimensions were .90 and .92, respectively (Houts & Horne, 2008). Cronbach alpha coefficients for the causality and responsibility domains for this study were .90 and .92, respectively.

Procedure

Data for the study were collected through a large-scale survey on the Internet asking for participation in a study of gay and bisexual male same-sex relationships. Participants were directed to the survey through emails distributed through list-servs and organizations with access to the targeted population as well as postings made by the researchers in more than 200 population-specific message boards and Web sites. The

invitation to participate gave a brief overview of the project, including the requirement to have been in a same-sex relationship of at least 6 months; this designation was stated to decrease the participation of individuals who were in the initial dating stages of a relationship. A URL link was provided that directed participants to the informed consent page, and they were not required to provide any identifying information. No incentives were provided for completing the survey. The study was available for approximately two months.

Data Analysis

For the research questions, the following data analysis was conducted:

1. A hierarchical regression tested the first research question exploring whether internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions (causality and responsibility dimensions) predict and account for significant variance of perpetration of psychological abuse.
2. The second research question of whether internalized homonegativity moderates the relationship between relationship attributions for partner negative behavior and perpetration of IPPA was explored with hierarchical multiple regression methods according to procedures described by Aiken and West (1991) for working with moderating variables. Variables of relationship attribution of causality and responsibility and internalized homonegativity were entered in Step 1. Then the interaction terms for relationship attributions of causality x internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions of responsibility x internalized homonegativity were entered into step 2. In order to determine if a significant amount of variance was explained by the variables in the models, F and p values were assessed. If there was a moderation of the relationship

by IH-attributions (causality and responsibility), there would have been a significant F value for the increase in R^2 and beta weights at step 2.

If the interaction between IH-relationship attribution of causality and/or IH-relationship of responsibility was found to be significant, a moderation analysis would have been conducted using guidelines for working with moderating variables as suggested by Aiken and West (1991). This would include evaluating the sample at high and low levels internalized homonegativity groups (overall internalized homonegativity score of +/- 1 SD). The interaction between high and low internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions (causality and responsibility dimensions) and perpetration of psychological abuse would be analyzed for significance. Overall, it was hypothesized that relationship attributions of causality and responsibility and internalized homonegativity would significantly predict psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships and that internalized homonegativity would be found to moderate the relationship between relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and perpetration of psychological abuse.

Chapter 4

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted with the sample and all data were checked to ensure accuracy of data entry, appropriate ranges and frequencies, and missing values. This included the examination of frequencies, means, and standard deviations of perpetration of psychological abuse, internalized homonegativity, and relationship attribution of causality and responsibility scales. All scales showed moderate to strong internal reliability indicators with Cronbach coefficient alphas ranging from .75 to .92. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables are presented in Table 2. Frequencies of scores on the psychological abuse scale are included in Table 3.

In accordance with Aiken and West's (1991) suggestions for moderation analysis, study variables (perpetration of psychological abuse, internalized homonegativity, relationship attributions [causality and responsibility dimensions]) were centered prior to conducting analysis. Centering variables allows for the reduction of multicollinearity issues within the data. Preliminary inspection of the data checked assumptions underlying regression analysis including issues of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Examination of scatterplot matrixes revealed that assumptions of normality and heteroscedasticity were met. The Durbin-Watson statistic assessed independence and revealed normal values around 2.0 (Field, 2009). Variance inflation factors (VIF) were assessed, revealing no values over 3, therefore, indicating no issues of multicollinearity.

Potential influential outliers within the data were analyzed (Bollen & Jackman, 1990). No data points had a Mahalanobis distance greater than 21.47 (Stevens, 2002) or a Cook D value greater than 1. One data point (.069) had a leverage (LEVER HAT) value ($n = 207, k = 3$) greater than the cutoff value of $d = .058$; therefore this data point was examined as a potential influential outlier. Results from regression analysis with and without the identified outlier did not reveal significant change, and the data point was not removed.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Sample Population (N = 207).

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Perpetration of Psychological Abuse	1.42	1.83	--			
2	Relationship Attribution of Causality	38.95	1.21	.34**	--		
3	Relationship Attribution of Responsibility	30.11	1.17	.33**	.73**	--	
4	Internalized Homonegativity	21.61	4.84	-.05	.04	.00	--

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3
Frequencies of Endorsed Items of IPPA and IPPA Scale Scores within Current Relationship (N = 207)

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Endorsed Items of IPPA		
I insulted or swore at my current partner	79	38.2
I called my current partner fat or ugly	9	4.3
I destroyed something belonging to my current partner	9	4.4
I shouted or yelled at my current partner	78	37.6
I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement with my current partner	70	33.2
I accused my current partner of being a lousy lover	10	4.8
I did something to spite my current partner	33	15.9
I threatened to hit or throw something at my current partner	6	2.9
Psychological Abuse Perpetration Scale Score		
.00	107	51.7
1.00	22	10.6
2.00	18	8.7
3.00	31	15
4.00	15	7.2
5.00	5	2.4
6.00	5	2.4
7.00	4	1.9

Main Regression Analyses

Hypothesis 1 stated that the independent variables relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and internalized homonegativity would significantly predict scores on a measure of perpetrations of psychological abuse. In order to examine this hypothesis, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) were entered into step 1. In this first step, the block of variables accounted for 13% ($F [3, 207] = 10.112, p < .05$) of the variance in perpetration of psychological abuse. One independent variable (relationship attribution of causality) showed a unique, significant influence on the variance in perpetration of psychological abuse ($\beta = .214$). This indicates that individuals who tend to attribute their partners' negative behaviors within the relationship to characteristics that are perceived to be internal, stable, and global report higher levels of perpetration of psychological abuse. Neither IH nor relationship attribution of responsibility were found to be unique predictors of psychological abuse perpetration.

Hypothesis 2 stated that internalized homonegativity would moderate the relationship between relationship attributions for partner negative behavior (causality and responsibility dimensions) and perpetration of psychological abuse so that the relationship between attributions and perpetration of abuse would be stronger for individuals with higher levels of internalized homonegativity. In order to examine this hypothesis, a moderation analysis was conducted. Interaction terms (internalized homonegativity x relationship attribution of causality and internalized homonegativity x relationship attribution of responsibility) were created and entered into the regression

equation at step 2. The addition of the interaction terms did not account for significant variance in perpetration of psychological abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .002$).

Since the interaction terms did not account for a significant amount of variance in perpetration of psychological abuse, internalized homonegativity does not appear to moderate the relationship between relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and perpetration of psychological abuse. Results from the hierarchical regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Perpetration of Psychological Abuse Among Men in Same-Sex Relationships (N = 207)

	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Step 1	IH	-.021	.025	-.054	-.830	.130
	Causality	.033	.015	.214	2.226*	
	Responsibility	.027	.015	.170	1.776	
Step 2	IH	-.023	.025	-.061	-.913	.132
	Causality	.033	.015	.218	2.260*	
	Responsibility	.026	.015	.165	1.710	
	IH*Causality	.002	.003	.054	.623	
	IH*Responsibility	-.002	.003	-.053	-.612	

Note. $R^2 = .130$ for Step 1 ($p < .001$); $\Delta R^2 = .002$ for Step 2 ($p > .05$). * $p < .05$. IH = Internalized Homonegativity, Causality = Relationship Attribution of Causality, Responsibility = Relationship Attributions of Responsibility

Chapter 5

Discussion

The following chapter presents the results of this study within the context of the existing body of literature. The role of internalized homonegativity and relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) on perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships will be discussed. Limitations of the study will be explored in addition to discussing clinical implications and future directions in research.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible relationship of relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and internalized homonegativity in psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. That is, the manner in which internalization of negative societal messages of what it means to be a man in a same-sex relationship and how an individual ascribes meaning to his partner's negative behaviors may predict psychological abuse perpetration was explored. This study focused on predictors of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships with particular emphasis on relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and how internalized homonegativity might affect the association of attributions and intimate partner psychological abuse (IPPA) perpetration in this sample.

The hypothesis that relationship attributions of causality and responsibility and internalized homonegativity would significantly predict psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships was partially supported. Only one of the three factors, relationship attribution of causality, uniquely and significantly contributed to the variance in perpetration of psychological abuse within the sample. Hypothesis 2 regarding the moderating effect of internalized homonegativity was not supported.

Perpetration of Psychological Abuse

Of the 207 participants, 48.3% of the sample endorsed at least 1 item of IPPA perpetration; however, the majority of the sample (51.7%) of the sample indicated no forms of psychological abuse perpetration toward their partners in the past year. The three most endorsed items of psychological abuse included “I insulted or swore at my current partner” ($n = 79$, 38.2%), “I shouted or yelled at my current partner” ($n = 78$, 37.6%), and “I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement with my current partner” ($n = 70$, 33.2%). Overall, levels of IPPA perpetration were considerably low among participants within the study. Of the 8 possible items indicating IPPA perpetration, only 13.9% endorsed 4 or more items and no participants endorsed engaging in all 8 types of IPPA perpetration.

The low degree of IPPA perpetration reported among men in same-sex relationships reflects similar rates in past studies of psychological abuse using samples of men in same-sex relationships that reported 33% perpetration rates (e.g., Nieves-Rosa et al., 2000), however, the rates are in contrast with studies of psychological perpetration among heterosexual couples, which have reported higher rates of IPPA perpetration including 90% (Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). Explanations for this finding may include differences among heterosexual couples versus same-sex couples in how they resolve conflict. Gottman and colleagues (2003) found that compared to heterosexual couples, men in same-sex relationships showed less belligerence, less domineering behavior, and less fear and tension when discussing issues of conflict within the relationship. Therefore, it is possible that the low amounts of IPPA perpetration observed in this study may reflect a significant difference in the manner by which men in same-sex relationships handle

issues of conflict within their relationships as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Overall, findings of low rates of perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships in this study appear parallel to prior research findings.

Internalized Homonegativity

This study examined internalized homonegativity as a predictor of perpetration of psychological abuse and as a possible moderator of the relationship between relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships. Unexpectedly, results did not support the hypothesis that internalized homonegativity would be a predictor of perpetration of psychological abuse and would moderate the relationship between relationship attributions and perpetration of psychological abuse. In addition, internalized homonegativity did not significantly correlate with any major variables in the study including relationship attributions (causality and responsibility). The lack of significance between IH and perpetration of psychological abuse among same-sex couples contrasts with previous studies.

Internalized homonegativity has been found to be associated with perpetration of IPPA in women's same-sex relationships (Balsam, Szymanski, & Nilsen, 2002; Hamilton, 2005) and men in same-sex relationships (Bartholomew et al., 2008). However, Bartholomew and colleagues' (2008) study was conducted using participants from a single neighborhood that is recognized for its large gay population ("West End" of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada), therefore the difference in findings may relate to geographic and sampling issues.

Moreover, the lack of significant findings may be a result of the overall lack of variance of IH scores of the population sampled. Out of a possible score of 15 to 60, the

range of scores within the sample was between 15 and 35 with only 43.9% of the sample endorsing scores above the mean ($m = 21.61$), revealing generally low levels of IH. This contrasts with Bartholomew and colleagues' (2008) higher level of variance in IH within their study ($m = 1.79$, $SD = .61$). The average age of the population sampled was 38.87 and participants were also highly educated with the majority of the sample (66%) having a college degree or higher and gainfully employed (only 29% indicated making less than \$30,000 a year). Therefore, these men generally had stability in their lives in terms of economic and educational attainment, and were of middle age; perhaps the majority had worked through negative self-attributions related to their sexual orientation. Internalized homonegativity has an inverse relationship with age and income (Shoptaw et al., 2009). Given that participant recruitment was conducted through the utilization of a number of gay-affirming listservs, bulletin boards, and websites, those who chose to take part in the study may have been more comfortable with answering personal questions regarding their sexual orientation than those who might report high degrees of IH. Therefore, it might be useful to employ different recruitment strategies in order to more accurately capture a more diverse sample of individuals who may struggle with issues of internalized homonegativity. One recruitment strategy might include targeting known community centers or mental health clinics that provide support groups for individuals struggling with issues relating to their sexual orientation.

Relationship Attribution

This study was the first to examine the potential relationship between the manner in which individuals ascribe meaning to their partners' negative (non-abusive) behaviors and perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships.

Specifically the study researched the relationship between partner attributions of the locus of control, globality, and stability (causality) and blameworthiness and intentionality (responsibility) of partners' negative behavior and perpetration of psychological abuse. The hypothesis that relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) would predict perpetration of psychological abuse was partially supported. Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between relationship attributions of both causality ($r = .34$) and responsibility ($r = .32$) dimensions and perpetration of psychological abuse within the sample of men in same-sex relationships. That is, higher levels of relationship attributions (causality and responsibility dimensions) were associated with higher levels of perpetration of psychological abuse. These results parallel research findings within heterosexual samples that indicate that perpetrators of IPPA tend to negatively attribute their partners' nonviolent, negative behaviors to their partners' negative intentions, selfish motivation, and blameworthiness (Copenhaver, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993; Scott & Strauss, 2007). However, results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed the significant and unique contribution of relationship attributions of causality, alone, to the meaningful variance of perpetration of psychological abuse. It is worth noting that although relationship attribution of responsibility did not reach statistical significance within the regression analysis, it was nearing significance.

There may be several explanations for why relationship attribution of causality was a significant predictor of perpetration of psychological abuse and attribution of responsibility was not. Perhaps this finding is related to the process of projecting a negative sense of self or encompassing an insecure working model of attachment. As

noted by Lewis (1971), it is possible that an individual who experiences a deep sense of being innately bad, or having an insecure working model of attachment (e.g., “I am bad”), will project hostility towards self onto those that they feel will reject them for being innately bad and/or will force them to experience the shame of being innately bad. The responsibility dimension of relationship attribution speaks to the manner in which an individual attributes the intention, motivation, and locus of blame of a negative (non-abusive) behavior exhibited by the partner to purposeful, selfish, and blameworthy factors of the partner. In other words, responsibility attribution captures how much an individual believes his partner is to blame or is responsible for the negative behavior.

In contrast, relationship attribution of causality refers to the tendency for an individual to perceive their partner’s negative behavior as representing an internal locus of control (innate within the partner) and a stable characteristic (unchangeable element of the partner). In addition, the cause for the behavior is also manifested across multiple situations. Therefore, it is possible that given what might be the source of an individual’s aggression stems from the projected sense of an innate negative self, attributions of causality might be more predictive of IPPA perpetration than attributions of responsibility given that relationship attribution of causality reflects the perception of a global sense of the partner as being innately flawed. That is, if an individual projects his innate sense of negative self onto his partner, then attributions of causality would be consistent with explanations of partner behavior including internal locus of control (internal/innate), stability (unchangeable) and globality (manifests in other elements of the partner), rather than placing blame or responsibility of the behavior onto the partner.

Moreover, if an individual develops an insecure working model of attachment then the manner in which he perceives self, others, and the world in general is negatively construed. Therefore, it is possible that for participants who developed a more rigid cognitive structure regarding their attributions of their partners may have at their foundations insecure working models of attachment.

Internalized homonegativity did not significantly relate to attributions or psychological abuse. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the manner in which one internalizes negative messages about being gay does not appear to influence the manner in which men in same-sex relationship attribute their partners' negative (non-abusive) behaviors.

Future Research

Findings from this study provide several potential avenues of continued research regarding issues of IPPA perpetration, relationship attributions, and internalized homonegativity. The occurrence and deleterious impacts of IPPA perpetration warrants continued investigation. One finding of this investigation is that relationship attributions play a role in perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships. Specifically, relationship attributions of causality explain variance in perpetration of IPPA. Although correlation analysis revealed statistical significance between both dimensions of relationship attributions and perpetration of IPPA, relationship attribution of responsibility failed to explain variance in perpetration of IPPA.

An individual that has attributions of causality regarding his partner's negative behavior ultimately believes the causes of behaviors are the result of a trait flaw within his partner (i.e., there is no hope for this part of the partner to change and the partner is

innately flawed). An individual that attributes the responsibility regarding his partner's negative behaviors does not believe that the behaviors are a reflection of a constant element of his partner; rather, an explanation of the behavior being related to his partner's motivation and purposeful intentions. In other words, one can forgive an occasional mess up, however if that individual believes that the mess up reflects a pervasive character flaw within his partner, then that individual's frustration and hopelessness may bring about stronger reactions. A stronger response is required if one is hoping for a grand personality change.

Therefore, the difference found within the regression analysis regarding perpetration of psychological abuse might reflect this crucial difference. If an individual is attributing responsibility of negative behaviors to self-focused and purposeful intentions of his partner, there is some flexibility in perceiving his partner in a positive manner. However, if an individual holds the belief that the causes of negative behaviors within the relationship are due to a trait factor within his partner (i.e., having a global view of his partner as being innately flawed), the distortion of thought is arguably more pervasive in nature. Therefore, those who endorse such attributions of causality may reflect a more rigid and/or distorted perception of their partners and therefore may be more likely to lack cognitive flexibility when dealing with emotional distress. It may be due to the lack of cognitive flexibility or that there may be much more urgency in making the partner change (act better) that these individuals may be more likely to utilize unhealthy forms of coping such as perpetration of psychological abuse.

The lack of significance found with relationship attribution of responsibility invites the question of why the difference in findings with this sample when both

dimensions have been shown to predict perpetration of IPPA in heterosexual samples? Moreover, given that relationship attributions have yet to receive extensive focus within IPV research in GLB populations, further exploration of the potential role of relationship attributions is warranted. Specifically, research attention on the possible role of relationship attributions and IPPA can expand to other forms of abuse including both perpetration and victimization of physical and sexual aggression.

Another finding of the study includes a lack of significant associations of internalized homonegativity with other examined variables including relationship attributions (causality and responsibility) and perpetration of IPPA. The lower levels of IH appear to reflect the sample's overall healthy experience of their sexual orientation, however, it leaves the question of what are the implications regarding perpetration of IPPA for men in same-sex relationships that endorse high levels of IH? A study that explores this question with individuals with higher levels of IH may render different results regarding IH's potential moderating effects on the relationship between relationship attributions and perpetration of psychological abuse.

Lastly, given that within this study internalized homonegativity was not found to moderate the relationships between relationship attributions and perpetration of psychological abuse, there remains the question of what other factors might interact with attributions to predict IPPA perpetration? Perhaps variables that have been associated with perpetration of psychological abuse (e.g., insecure attachment orientation) or other constructs relevant to sexual minority identity (e.g., minority stress) might interact with relationship attributions of causality to predict perpetration of psychological abuse; or, it might be useful to explore the moderating effects of problem-solving or use of defense

mechanisms. Therefore, other variables that have been found to be associated with perpetration of psychological abuse including attachment orientation might be worth examining as a potential moderator between relationship attributions and perpetration of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships.

Clinical Implications

This study calls attention to the need to continue to understand and address the issues surrounding perpetration of IPPA among men in same-sex relationships. First, it is important to reiterate the importance of screening for psychological abuse in addition to physical abuse when working with all clients, including men in same-sex relationships because their rates of abuse are similar to abuse rates of lesbian and heterosexual couples. Psychological abuse is not often visible in the same way physical abuse might be, and therefore may require active inquiry to assess for within a clinical sample. One way to do this may be to include questions that specifically assess for psychological abuse perpetration and/or victimization in intake interviews to better identify this experience with clients.

Also, given that the study revealed a unique and positive contribution of relationship attribution of causality to the variance within perpetration of psychological abuse, counseling psychologists might employ several types of clinical techniques that can address attributions. One technique might include the use of emotional focused therapy as developed by Leslie Greenberg (2002). This approach would include having the client identify and experience the primary emotion(s) that underlie the abusive behavior (e.g., fear of abandonment) and assist the client with identifying ways to address and act differently based off of their emotional needs. Another technique might include

the use of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as developed by Aaron Beck (1999). This approach addresses the manner in which individuals construe events including the means by which they construct dysfunctional beliefs.

Utilizing CBT, a client's attributions of causality of events and behaviors of his partner can be identified and subsequently challenged with alternate beliefs/attribution to alter the consequences of subscribing to such a belief. For example, when working with a client who reports perpetrating psychological abuse towards his partner, a counseling psychologist might examine a recent event in which perpetration of IPPA occurred by breaking down the event into three steps. The first step would be to identify the activating event (e.g., "my partner criticized something I said"), the second step would be to identify the automatic belief/attribution related to that event (e.g., "my partner is a mean person that will never change"), the third step would include identifying behavioral consequences of experiencing that belief (e.g., "I felt hurt and then shouted and swore at my partner"). Once the three steps are identified, the manner in which the client perceives the causes of his partner's negative behavior can be challenged by the counseling psychologist with questions such as, "What other explanations can you come up with that would explain your partner's behavior?" Ultimately, this clinical approach may assist a client to gain alternate interpretations of the manner in which he construes his partner's behaviors. By doing so, this may help him to challenge his dysfunctional perceptions of his partner that will then lead to a more adaptive emotional reaction that will hopefully decrease the likelihood of psychological abuse perpetration.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the study. First, the sample population was somewhat homogenous in that the majority of participants were Caucasian (87%), well educated (66% received college education), and gainfully employed (29% indicating income < \$30,000/year). This population does not accurately capture the general U.S. population of men in same-sex relationships and therefore decreases the generalizability of findings. Next, the majority of participants (51.7%) indicated no perpetration of psychological abuse, therefore providing a skewed dataset to analyze. Although data was checked for outliers and potentially influential data points, the lack of variability on this measure may have impacted the ability to detect relationships among these variables.

Moreover, a key purpose of the study was to examine perpetration of psychological abuse as reported in a self-report measure. It may be that those who perpetrate psychological abuse may feel uncomfortable revealing such personal behavior and might have answered in a more socially desirable manner, therefore, possibly impacting the results of the study. Also, the data analyzed within the study is archival and was collected in 2005. Since the collection of the original data, numerous significant events have occurred in the U.S. including the repeal of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” (DADT), and the passing of gay marriage legislation in Connecticut, District of Columbia, Iowa, New Hampshire, and New York State. These socio-political changes might render different findings of such research questions with a population of men in same-sex relationships if sampled in present time. Finally, hierarchical regression was utilized as the main methodological procedure of analysis, which does not allow for causal interpretations to occur regarding the study’s findings.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible relationship of relationship attributions and internalized homonegativity in psychological abuse perpetration among men in same-sex relationships. Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between relationship attributions of both causality and responsibility dimensions and perpetration of psychological abuse within the sample. Therefore, for participants in this sample, higher levels of relationship attributions (causality and responsibility dimensions) indicated higher levels of perpetration of psychological abuse. Results of hierarchical regression analysis revealed the significant and unique contribution of relationship attributions of causality to the variance in perpetration of psychological abuse. Internalized homonegativity failed to explain significant variability in IPPA perpetration nor did it moderate the relationship between relationship attributions of causality-IPPA perpetration or relationship attributions of responsibility-IPPA perpetration by significant interactions. In addition, IH did not significantly correlate with any examined variable including relationship attributions of causality and responsibility.

This study highlights the need to continue to understand and address the issues surrounding perpetration of IPPA, including the role of relationship attributions. As perpetration of psychological abuse among men in same-sex relationships has been shown to be a real concern within society, the field of counseling psychology would do well to continue the exploration of how to best address this issue. By expanding on and

integrating knowledge gained from this study, counseling psychologists may better deal with the clinical implications of working with this population and therefore assist in the effort to alleviate perpetration of psychological abuse.

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Appendix A

Demographics

1. What is your age in years? _____
2. What is your partner's age in years? _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity?
 - a. Native American
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. African-American
 - d. Latino
 - e. White
 - f. Biracial/Multiracial
 - g. Jewish
 - h. Other (please specify) _____
4. How would your partner describe his race/ethnicity?
 - a. Native American
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. African-American
 - d. Latino
 - e. White
 - f. Biracial/Multiracial
 - g. Jewish
 - h. Other (please specify) _____
5. What is your partner's educational background?
 - a. Some high school
 - b. High school diploma
 - c. Vocational/Technical School
 - d. Some college
 - e. College degree
 - f. Master's degree
 - g. Doctoral degree
 - h. Professional degree
 - i. Other (please specify) _____
6. What is your occupation? _____
7. How would you categorize your occupation?
 - a. Professional
 - b. Skilled
 - c. Laborer
 - d. Student
 - e. Service industry
 - f. Retired
 - g. Other (please specify) _____
8. What is your partner's occupation? _____
9. How would you categorize your partner's occupation?
 - a. Professional

- b. Skilled
 - c. Laborer
 - d. Student
 - e. Service industry
 - f. Retired
 - g. Other (please specify) _____
10. What is your primary source of financial support?
- a. Employment
 - b. Parents or family
 - c. Partner/lover
 - d. Friends
 - e. Social Security or general assistance
 - f. Unemployment insurance
 - g. Loans
 - h. Investments/savings
 - i. Other _____
11. What is your partner's primary source of financial support?
- a. Employment
 - b. Parents or family
 - c. Partner/lover
 - d. Friends
 - e. Social Security or general assistance
 - f. Unemployment insurance
 - g. Loans
 - h. Investments/savings
 - i. Other _____
12. Personal income:
- a. Not employed at the current time
 - b. Not employed as I am a full time student
 - c. Less than 10,000
 - d. 10,000-20,000
 - e. 20,001-30,000
 - f. 30,001-40,000
 - g. 40,001-50,000
 - h. 50,001-60,000
 - i. 60,001-70,000
 - j. 70,001-80,000
 - k. 80,001-90,000
 - l. 90,001-100,000
 - m. 100,001-200,000
 - n. 200,001-300,000
 - o. 300,001-400,000
 - p. 400,001-500,000
 - q. 500,000+
 - r. Other (please specify) _____
13. To the best of your knowledge, what is your partner's personal income?

- a. Not employed at the current time
- b. Not employed as I am a full time student
- c. Less than 10,000
- d. 10,000-20,000
- e. 20,001-30,000
- f. 30,001-40,000
- g. 40,001-50,000
- h. 50,001-60,000
- i. 60,001-70,000
- j. 70,001-80,000
- k. 80,001-90,000
- l. 90,001-100,000
- m. 100,001-200,000
- n. 200,001-300,000
- o. 300,001-400,000
- p. 400,001-500,000
- q. 500,000+
- r. Other (please specify) _____

14. Relationship status: Please mark ALL that apply (If you are not in a same-sex relationship that has been ongoing for 6 months or more, please do not continue with this survey or submit it).

- Monogamous relationship with same-sex partner
- Living with same-sex partner
- Dating/Relationship with opposite sex in addition to same-sex partner
- Open relationship that includes sexual and emotional relationships outside this relationship
- Open relationship that includes non-relational sex only outside relationship
- Sexual relationships outside primary relationship without partner's knowledge.
- Civil union (e.g., Vermont residence) with same-sex partner
- Marriage (e.g., Ontario, City of San Francisco) with same-sex partner
- Private commitment ceremony between you and your partner
- Commitment ceremony attended by close friends and family and not officiated by spiritual leader or other official
- Commitment ceremony officiated by spiritual leader or other official with close family and friends

15. My partner and I would probably marry officially if we had the legal option.

- My partner and I are legally married.
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

16. Why or why not? _____

17. My partner and I would probably officially register for a civil union.

- My partner and I have a civil union
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
18. As far as civil unions go (please check all that you support):
- They are equivalent to marriage
 - They set up a second class status when compared to full marriage rights
 - They are unnecessary for gay relationships, as there are legal processes to protect partners (wills, power of attorneys, etc.)
 - They are an acceptable alternative if marriage rights are not granted
 - Marriage is a heterosexual institution, therefore, civil unions are the preferable option
 - Civil unions, follow a traditional heterosexual model of relationships and are not desirable for gay male couples
 - Other (please specify) _____
19. Now I am living
- By myself
 - With my parent(s)
 - With other members of my family
 - With my partner
 - With friends
 - With roommate
 - Other (please specify) _____
20. Counting your current relationship, how many long-term same-sex relationships have you had?
- This is my first
 - 2 to 4
 - 5 or more
21. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
- Gay or homosexual
 - Bisexual
 - Other (please specify) _____
22. I live in
- A large city (over one million people)
 - A medium sized city (500,001 to one million)
 - A small city (100,001 to 500,000 people)
 - A large town (50,001 to 100,000)
 - A medium size town (10,000 to 50,000)
 - Small town or rural environment (under 10,000 people)
23. The town/city I live in now has: (check all)
- A GLB bar or nightclub
 - BLG sports teams
 - A GLB pride march
 - GLB couples commonly holding hands in public

- GLB supportive places of worship
 - Laws to protect against discrimination based upon sexual orientation (e.g., city ordinances)
 - Active attempts to convert gay, lesbian, or bisexual people to heterosexuality (i.e., Exodus International, Love in Action, church groups)
 - A GLB community center
 - Other (please specify) _____
24. In which state/province do you live? _____
25. Do you have children?
- No, I do not have children at this time
 - Yes, my partner and I have a child (children) we planned, fathered and are raising together in our home
 - Yes, my partner has a child (children) from a previous relationship who I'm parenting in our home
 - Yes, I have a child (children) from a previous relationship who I'm parenting in our home with my partner
 - Yes, my partner and I have adopted a child (children) we are raising in our home
 - Yes, my partner has a child (children) from a previous relationship who we parent but do not have primary custody.
 - Yes, I have a child (children) from a previous relationship who we parent but do not have primary custody.
 - Yes, I or my partner have a child (children) that are grown and no longer have custody over.
 - Other (please specify) _____
26. What religion do you currently identify with:
- Conservative Protestant (i.e., Southern Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.)
 - Mainline Protestant (Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, etc.)
 - Church of Latter Day Saints
 - Catholicism
 - Orthodox Judaism
 - Conservative Judaism
 - Reformed Judaism
 - Islamic
 - Hindu
 - Buddhist
 - Wiccan/Paganism
 - Atheism
 - Taoism
 - Agnostism
 - Other (please specify) _____
27. Does your partner identify with the same faith? If not, please specify his faith below.
- Yes
 - No (please specify) _____

28. After you came out as gay (or during the time you began to self-identify as gay), did you change your involvement in your religion due to conflict between your religious teachings and your sexual orientation? What did you do?
- Decreased involvement in congregation/faith group
 - Left congregation or religion, but maintained personal beliefs
 - Changed to a gay-affirming religion or congregation/faith group
 - Became atheist or agnostic
 - I've experienced no conflicts and no changes in my religious affiliation
 - Not applicable
 - I've experienced conflict but made no changes in my faith affiliation
 - Other (please specify) _____
29. My church/place of worship is gay-affirming
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable
30. How long have you been out to yourself or acknowledged same-sex attraction? (Number of years) _____
31. How long have you been out to most friends (acknowledged same-sex attraction)? YEARS _____
32. How long have you been out to one or more parents or primary caregivers (acknowledged same-sex attraction)? YEARS _____
33. My partner is out to
- No one
 - A select few people
 - Some friends only
 - Some friends and family
 - Almost all friends and family
 - All friends and family
34. How old were you when you had your first serious relationship with someone of the same-sex? (please enter digits-i.e., type in '20,' not 'twenty')
35. How long did it last/has it lasted? _____

Appendix B

Internalized Homonegativity

Revised (Shidlo) Nungesser Homosexuality Attitudes Inventory (Shidlo, 1994)

	Strongly Disagree	Mainly Disagree	Mainly Agree	Strongly Agree
a. When I am in conversation with a person of the same-sex and that person touches me, it does <u>not</u> make me uncomfortable.				
b. Whenever I think a lot about being G/B, I feel depressed				
c. I am glad to be G/B				
d. When I am sexually attracted to a person of the same-sex, I feel uncomfortable.				
e. I am proud to be a part of the G/B community				
f. My G/B identity does not make unhappy				
g. Whenever I think about being G/B I feel critical about myself.				
h. I wish I were heterosexual				
i. I do not think I will be able to have a long-term relationship with an individual of the same-sex.				
j. I have been in counseling because I wanted to stop having same-sex sexual feelings.				
k. I have tried killing myself because I couldn't accept my G/B identity.				
l. There have been times when I've felt so rotten about being G/B that I wanted to be dead.				
m. I have tried killing myself because it seemed that my life as a G/B person was too miserable to bear.				
n. I find it important that I read G/B books/newspapers				
o. It's important for me to feel I'm a part of the G/B community.				

Appendix C

Psychological Abuse Perpetration

The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2) (Straus, Hamby, & Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996)

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have your differences.

Please indicate how many times you and your current partner did each of these things in the past year.

1. How often did this happen? I insulted or swore at my (Please choose the best answer that applies for your current partner and your past male partner(s):
 - Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times

2. I called my current or past partner(s) fat or ugly. (Please choose all that apply).
 - Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times

3. I destroyed something belonging to my current or past partner(s). (Please choose all that apply).
 - Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times

4. I shouted or yelled at my current or past partner(s). (Please choose all that apply).

- Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times
5. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement with my current or past partner(s). (Please choose all that apply)
- Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times
6. I accused my current or past partner(s) of being a lousy lover. (Please choose all that apply)
- Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times
7. I did something to spite my current or past partner(s). Please choose all that apply).
- Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times
8. I threatened to hit or throw something at my current or past partner(s). (Please choose all that apply).
- Current partner 0 times
 - Current partner 1-2 times
 - Current partner 3 or more times
 - Past male partner(s) 0 times
 - Past male partner(s) 1-2 times
 - Past male partner(s) 3 or more times

Appendix D

Relationship Attributions

Relationship Attribution Measure (RAM) (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992).

This questionnaire describes several things that your partner might do. Imagine your partner performing each behavior and then read the statements that follow it. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by using the rating scale below:

Your partner criticizes something you say:

My partner's behavior was due to something about him (e. g. the type of person he is, the mood he was in)

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner criticizes me is not likely to change.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner criticized me is something that affects other areas of our relationship.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner criticized me on purpose rather than unintentionally.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner's behavior was motivated by selfish rather than *unselfish* concerns.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner deserves to be blamed for criticizing me.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

Your partner begins to spend less time with you:

My partner's behavior was due to something about him (e.g. the type of person he is, the mood he was in)

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner spends less time with me is *not* likely to change.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner spends less time with me is something that affects other areas of our relationship.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner spends less time with me on purpose rather than unintentionally.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree

- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner's behavior was motivated by selfish rather than *unselfish* concerns.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner deserves to be blamed for spending less time with me.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

Your partner does not pay attention to what you are saying.

My partner's behavior was due to something about him (e.g. the type of person he is, the mood he was in)

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner does not pay attention to what I am saying is *not* likely to change.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner does not pay attention to what I am saying is something that affects other areas of our relationship.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat

- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner does not pay attention to what I am saying on purpose rather than unintentionally.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner's behavior was motivated by selfish rather than *unselfish* concerns.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner deserves to be blamed for not paying attention to what I am saying.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

Your partner is cool and distant

My partner's behavior was due to something about him (e.g. the type of person he is, the mood he was in)

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner is cool and distant is *not* likely to change.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

The reason my partner is cool and distant is something that affects other areas of our relationship.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner was cool and distant on purpose rather than unintentionally.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner's behavior is motivated by selfish rather than unselfish concerns.

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly

My partner deserves to be blamed for being cool and distant

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Agree somewhat
- Agree
- Agree strongly