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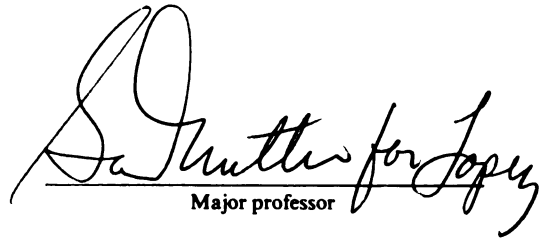

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ANTECEDENTS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE: ADULT ATTACHMENT, GENDER, AND DEFENSE

By

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ABSTRACT

ANTECEDENTS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE: ADULT ATTACHMENT, GENDER, AND DEFENSE

By

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Psychological abuse in heterosexual relationships as perpetrated by college students was examined. Gender differences and the influences of insecure attachment and defense mechanisms were investigated. Hierarchical regression was used to test gender, attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, narcissism, self-splitting, and other-splitting as predictors of dominance and emotional abuse. Gender was expected to moderate attachment-abuse relationships. Defense mechanisms were expected to moderate avoidance-abuse relationships and to mediate anxiety-abuse relationships. Separate mediator-moderator models were tested for dominance and emotional abuse. Stress level was controlled. The interaction between gender and attachment avoidance and narcissism significantly predicted dominance. Men but not women with higher levels of attachment avoidance endorsed the use of more dominance strategies. Higher levels of defensive uses of narcissism predicted higher dominance scores. Significant predictors of emotional abuse included narcissism and the interaction between narcissism and attachment avoidance. Higher levels of defensive uses of narcissism predicted more frequent emotional abuse. Higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse only when levels of narcissism were higher than average. Defensive uses of narcissism led to psychologically abusive behavior in college students, but the influences of attachment avoidance depended upon moderators such as gender and

narcissism. Posthoc analyses elucidated gender differences in dominance and mediators between attachment insecurity and emotional abuse. Among women, other-splitting was the only variable to significantly predict dominance scores. Among men, the significant predictors were stress, attachment avoidance, and narcissism. Preliminary findings regarding self-splitting as a mediator of the attachment anxiety-emotional abuse relationship and other-splitting as a moderator of the relationship between attachment avoidance and emotional abuse need further study. Interpretations of findings linked male gender role socialization, difficulties with closeness in romantic relationships, and a narcissistic sense of exploitation and entitlement to psychological abuse and domestic violence. Implications for practice and research were discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a prevalent global problem. Universally, men rape, beat, and kill female partners. Depending on their country, 20% to 50% of women experience such violence (World Health Organization, 1996, as cited by UNICEF, 2000). Because it occurs significantly more often to women than men, the United Nations considers domestic violence a human rights violation, and international laws hold governments accountable to provide equal protection to women (Thomas & Beasley, 1993). Such substantial gender differences may be explained in part by gender role socialization. Men may be socialized to be aggressive toward female partners.

In the United States, an estimated 95% of domestic violence is male-to-female (USDOJ, 1983, 1993). In the 1998 National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thoennes), 25% of women and 8% of men reported being raped or physically assaulted by a spouse, partner, or date in their lifetime; men perpetrated approximately 90% of this violence. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 1998), adult White females are the most frequent victims of family violence, while their spouses and cohabitating partners are the most frequent perpetrators. Domestic violence, typically defined in research as sexual and physical abuse, occurs in the context of romantic relationships. Intimate attachments are often the most intense relationships, which may help explain such widespread abuse.

The study of domestic violence has expanded in recent years to include psychological abuse. Female victims often report that psychological abuse is more harmful than physical abuse (for review, see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999). In 1994 and

2000, the United States passed The Violence Against Women Acts (U. S. Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2000). The mandates from the 1994 Act resulted in the following findings, among others: (a) the causes of violence against women are poorly understood, (b) the focus in current research on physical abuse neglects harm caused by emotional and psychological abuse, and (c) the incidence and dynamics involved in psychological and emotional abuse need further study (USDOJ, 1998). Discovering characteristics of perpetrators of psychological abuse may illuminate potential causes and inform prevention and intervention strategies.

Factors Contributing to Psychological Abuse

Known correlates of psychological abuse include: (a) conflict, (b) alcohol intoxication, (c) approving of physical aggression, (d) being verbally aggressive outside the home, (e) younger age and fewer children in married couples, (f) relationship dissatisfaction, (g) stressful life events (for women not men), (h) witnessing interparental violence, (i) an effort to control others and/or dissatisfaction with power arrangements, and (j) lack of argument skill (for review, see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999). All heterosexual romantic relationships encounter conflict, stress, and dissatisfaction, but numerous individuals refrain from psychological abuse. More information is needed about individual differences in perpetration of abuse to evaluate risk and to plan effective interventions.

One study (Dutton, Starzomski, & Ryan, 1996) showed that early experiences of trauma such as paternal rejection, child abuse, and absence of maternal warmth contribute to personality formation that leads to abusive behavior in adulthood. One way to examine how parent-child relationships and personality correspond to adult relationships is

through attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Several studies have found a relationship between insecure or nonoptimal romantic attachments and abuse (Hoover, Murphy, & Taft, 1999; Roberts & Noller, 1998; also see Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 1999); however, links between adult attachment style and psychological abuse need further study. Getting married or becoming engaged is theorized to be a risk factor for abuse (see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999), suggesting that activation of attachment strategies in young adults should be investigated. Insecure adult attachment style may amplify the risk of psychological abuse.

Preventing Psychological Abuse by College Students

Preventing male violence against women is encouraged by the American Psychological Association and especially by counseling psychologists with their emphasis on prevention (Albee, 2000; Hage, 2000). Psychological abuse often coexists with physical violence (see Burgess & Draper, 1989) and results in similar negative effects (e. g., O'Leary, 1999). Harmful effects include depression, lowered self-esteem, reduced sense of autonomy, and fearfulness (Davies, Lyon, & Monti-Catania, 1998; Sakett & Saunders, 1999). Suicide is another risk related to psychological abuse. Women report that mental stress from psychological abuse leads to suicidal ideation; 35% to 40% of battered women attempt suicide in the U. S. (Back, Post, & D'Arcy, 1982), and battered women are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than other women worldwide (United Nations, 1989, as cited by UNICEF, 2000). Domestic violence in general and psychological abuse in particular heighten suicide and homicide risks.

Homicides by intimate partners have decreased over the past 20 years in all groups except White, unmarried female victims (Puzone, Saltzman, Kresnow, Thompson,

& Mercy, 2000). In the United States, young women are the population at greatest risk of being physically and psychologically abused by romantic partners. Women age 19 to 29 are more likely than women of other ages to experience physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995). Over three quarters of college-age women reported experiencing psychological abuse in the previous six months (Neufeld, McNamara, & Ertl, 1999). Although these statistics tally victim demographics, most domestic violence occurs in heterosexual relationships, so young adult males may be at greatest risk of perpetration.

> More research is needed on psychological abuse...in early stages of relationship formation, and in youthful samples....potentially problematic relationship patterns often begin in adolescence or early adulthood, and escalating coercive processes often begin near the onset of intimate relationships. (Murphy & Cascardi, 1999, pp. 221-222)

There are many reasons to study psychological abuse in young, heterosexual couples, including informing interventions that reduce risk. Prevention efforts often target easily accessible groups of potential victims and perpetrators, such as high school and college students. Effective assessment strategies and interventions with college student perpetrators are needed.

College students may be particularly at risk of abusive relationships because of their developmental status. College students often leave home, form new attachments, mismanage close relationships as part of a relational learning process, and determine the quality of relationship they prefer. Over half of college students report psychological and/or physical abuse in their dating relationships (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). College

students are at great risk; in addition, they often seek help at university counseling centers for relationship problems and may be uniquely amenable to intervention. Because the effects of abuse are better known and therefore easier to assess than perpetration risks, this research seeks to contribute to enhanced assessment of perpetration. In addition, because counseling centers most often counsel individuals, self-reported perpetration as it might be presented in therapy is observed and not victim or observer perspectives.

Attachment and Feminist Theories

Romantic relationships and gender are primary contributors to domestic violence but need to be examined in relationship to psychological abuse. In this study, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1988) is used to describe individual differences in styles of relating in romantic relationships. Because secure attachments are optimal, insecurity in adult attachment style is analyzed in relationship to psychological abuse. Feminist theory (J. B. Miller, 1976/1986, 1991) provides a sociological perspective of group differences related to gender, including gender role socialization. Each theory has been utilized to study physical abuse, but these studies seldom include psychological abuse. In addition, these two theories have rarely been integrated, though gender role socialization and insecure attachment orientations combined may be more explanatory of psychological abuse (see Mauricio & Gormley, 2001). Further, adult attachment orientations may have different behavioral manifestations depending on affective and cognitive coping strategies (Collins, 1996), including defense mechanisms; psychodynamic theory is used to illustrate how certain defense mechanisms may increase the risk of psychologically abusive behavior.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Controversy surrounds domestic violence, in part because it is a relatively new field of study that is interdisciplinary and international in scope. There are diverse viewpoints regarding (a) the definition of domestic violence, (b) the nature of psychological abuse, and (c) theories that best explain abuse in romantic relationships.

Definitions of Domestic Violence and Psychological Abuse

An internationally accepted definition of violence against women is:

> Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993)

Psychological abuse is defined as behavior used to intimidate or persecute, including: "threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 3). In the United States, domestic violence is defined as a pattern of emotional, sexual, and economic coercion with periodic physical assaults or severe threats of bodily injury; a cluster of controlling behaviors that serves to dominate partners so batterers get their own way (Schechter, 1987). Psychological abuse is an important aspect of a complex array of behavior clustered under the definition of domestic violence, but it can also exist separately from other types of abuse. In this inquiry, psychological abuse is the only construct studied.

Psychological Abuse

Broad definitions of abusiveness are recommended by feminists to maximize the utility of self-report measures (Smith, 1994); therefore, the broadest definition of psychological abuse is used. Psychological abuse has been characterized as misuses of power, verbally abusive behavior, and intentional harmfulness. The power and control wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project [DAIP], date unknown) has been used for over twenty years to help victims and perpetrators understand psychological aspects of domestic violence. Tactics used to control a partner within the context of physical and sexual violence are: emotional abuse; economic abuse; using the children; threats; using male privilege; intimidation; isolation; and minimizing, denying, and blaming. Other reports of psychological tactics include calling partners "crazy," insults, devaluing their thoughts and opinions, degrading them, forcing partners to use drugs and alcohol (Davies et al., 1998), breaking partners' favorite possessions, threatening to kill oneself, and killing the family pet (Murphy & Cascardi, 1999).

Other authors (see Evans, 1992) report that verbal abuse includes: abusive anger, name-calling, threatening, undermining, and withholding. Sable (1998) described emotionally abusive adult attachments as consistently threatening, degrading, humiliating, and controlling; behaviors run from the extreme of outright hostility and coercion to more covert activities, such as ignoring and discounting. Others (e. g., O'Hearn & Davis, 1997) suggest that the perpetrator must intend to lower the status of the victim and that successful emotional abuse damages a victim's self-esteem and self-concept. Dobash and Dobash (1984) suggested that men intend to provoke situations in which they may punish their wives because it is legitimate to do so within a sociocultural

context of patriarchal domination. Marshall (1996), however, suggested that the intentions of perpetrators are unimportant. Any actions that result in undermining the victim are psychologically abusive.

Some authors (see Edleson, 1996) caution that there is a need to differentiate between being mean and being abusive. Several methods of differentiating these constructs were found. Extremely stressful events that do not happen to most people are considered traumatic (Schlenger, Fairbank, Jordan, & Caddell, 1997), so *severity* of a partner's behavior is a consideration. Some authors (see Kelly, 1996) theorize that it is the chronic nature of abuse, whether physical, psychological, or sexual, that leads to the greatest violation of one's sense of self, sense of others, and sense of self in relation to others. Thereby, the repetitive pattern or *frequency* of psychological attack in a chronically, verbally abusive relationship is important. Other authors (e.g., Roth, Lebowitz, & DeRosa, 1997) purport that *the effect on the victim* determines whether a tactic is injurious or not. For example, calling someone "crazy" who has just been diagnosed with depression and prescribed medication may have a deleterious effect, but a different tactic would be necessary to have the same effect on someone who was not being treated for mental health concerns.

Psychological Abuse Research

In a recent special issue of *Violence and Victims* devoted to psychological abuse, O'Leary (1999) reviewed research and definitions. He concluded that (a) psychological abuse has a more severe effect on victims than physical abuse, (b) psychological abuse predicts physical abuse and lowered self-esteem in victims, and (c) the data suggest the following definition of psychological abuse:

> acts of recurring criticism and/or verbal aggression toward a partner, and/or acts of isolation and domination of a partner. Generally, such actions cause the partner to be fearful of the other or lead the partner to have very low self-esteem. (p. 19)

In the same issue, Murphy and Hoover (1999) proposed that psychological abuse damages the recipient's emotional well being or self-concept.

A number of studies have attempted to clarify the concept of psychological abuse and measure its effects. Sakett and Saunders (1999) derived four factors: (a) ridiculing of traits, (b) criticizing of behavior, (c) ignoring, and (d) jealous control. Ridicule was rated as the most severe tactic and ignoring was the strongest predictor of low self-esteem. A qualitative study (LaVoie, Robitaille, & Hebert, 2000) discovered categories related to: (a) death threats, (b) denigration and insults, (c) social control and jealousy, (d) indifference, (e) threats of separation and reprisals, (f) damaging reputations (of girls), and (g) harassment after the separation. In addition, one strategy reported by female victims was illustrated with the following quote: "He knows you too well, you see, so he knows exactly how to hurt you. It's very subtle" (p. 16). Another gender difference besides vulnerable reputations in females was that males were the ones motivated to use violence to gain power or control. Perhaps men are socialized to dominate women, women are socialized to submit to men, and the potential for women to be vulnerable to psychological abuse by men is a negative outcome of gender role socialization.

Another study found six principal components of psychological abuse (Sullivan, Parisian, & Davidson, 1991, as reviewed by O'Leary, 1999). The six subscales were (a) criticism and ridicule, (b) social isolation and control, (c) threats and violence, (d) emotional withdrawal, (e) manipulation, and (f) emotional callousness. Marshall (1999)

found orthogonal relationships between overt and subtle psychological abuse, with each dimension involving a number of factors. The overt dimension included domination, indifference, monitoring, and discrediting. Subtle items fell into the categories of undermining, discounting, and isolating. One of Marshall's most interesting findings is that subtle abuse had more harmful effects on recipients than overt acts. A complete range of psychological abuse tactics is worthy of inquiry.

Theoretical Foundations

Many theories have been applied to the study of domestic violence, but the theory with the most success publicizing the problem, helping victims, and improving legal responses through grassroots efforts is feminist theory (see Enns, 1993). More traditional psychodynamic views associate battering behavior with personality disorders (e.g., Scalia, 1994), and researchers have found evidence of narcissism, borderline personality, and other personality disorder traits in batterer populations (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994; Rothschild, Dimson, Storaasli, & Clapp, 1997; Tweed & Dutton, 1998). However, the prevalence of domestic violence is too great to be fully accounted for by such infrequent pathology.

Cognitive-behavioral theorists (e.g., Ganley, 1989) suggest that batterers learn to use power and control tactics by watching their fathers or other men while they are growing up. Researchers have consistently found that men who witnessed domestic violence as children and were victims of child abuse are more likely to perpetrate domestic violence (see Heise, 1998). Subsequently, based on the assumption that male perpetrators need to learn different skills in order to relate more effectively to female partners many practitioners use social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to intervene with

batterers. However, these interventions are insufficient to stop violence (see Nosko & Wallace, 1988).

Family systems theorists have proposed that violence in couples results from problems in communication or conflict resolution to which both partners contribute (see Straus, 1973). Family systems theory has been criticized for: (a) failing to hold batterers accountable for their violent behavior, (b) putting women at risk by advocating couples therapy or avoiding implications of violence (Bograd, 1984, 1992), and (c) failing to recognize historical inequities and power differentials within families that preclude equal contributions by men and women (Enns, 1993). Even proponents of family systems theory have reported difficulty applying it to assessing violence in couples (Aldarondo & Straus, 1994).

Attachment theory has also been applied to domestic violence research. Adult attachment concepts overlap with personality disorder traits (Karen, 1994), cognitive-behavioral schema (Crittenden, 1995), and family systems dynamics (Roberts & Noller, 1998). However, adult attachment classifications are more predictive of relationship outcomes than personality measures (see Lopez, 1995). Attachment therapists combine cognitive, relational, emotion-focused, and other types of interventions (Bowlby, 1979; Stosny, 1995), providing opportunities for more complex conceptualizations than cognitive theory. Attachment theory may be more effective at conceptualizing couple and family issues than family systems theories (Lindegger & Barry, 1999). Feminist and attachment theories combined capture sociological, dyadic, individual behavior, and intrapsychic levels of influence on psychological abuse.

Feminist Theory

Feminist psychological theory is concerned with gender similarities and differences (Aspy & Sandhu, 1999). Societal structures create and maintain an important gender difference, that men and masculinity are granted more power and status in American society than women and femininity (Miller, 1976/1986). This power differential is evidenced two ways: economically and physically. Economically, women are paid lower wages than men for similar work and are underrepresented in positions of highest power (see Aspy & Sandhu). Globally, "the occurrence of marital violence seems to be related significantly to the existence of patriarchal norms and values where men control the wealth and have, thereby, a power advantage over women" (Burgess & Draper, 1989, p. 86). A feminist analysis of domestic violence attributes one group's domination of another group to social norms that allow this to happen (Walker, 1990).

Reports that women are as physically violent as men abound, most often through use of the Conflict Tactics Scale (see Straus, 1990). Feminists critique this scale because it counts behaviors without consideration for differences in physical strength of perpetrators, the purpose of the behaviors, or the severity of resulting injuries (see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999). DeKeseredy (1999) found that, although the frequency of reported incidents overall may be similar to men, (a) women seldom initiate attacks; (b) women report that many violent behaviors are in self-defense or in order to fight back; and (c) severe violence is uncommon by women, especially the use of weapons.

"A tendency to 'blame the victim' or project one's own unwanted vulnerability or anxiety onto others also leads to destructive perceptions and behavior towards marginalized groups" (Jordan, 1997, p. 3). Such defensiveness contributes to perpetuation

of abuse and misinterpretations of the dynamics involved. It is difficult to interpret research results in complicated contexts without defensiveness; this problem can lead to gender bias, in part because psychological explanations often exclude political or sociological interpretations (Enns, 1993). Feminist research aspires to emancipate women by describing nonoppressive family relationships and challenging widely held professional assumptions that are gender biased (Thompson, 1992). Group effects, such as gender differences, are considered more explanatory of the prevalence of domestic violence than individual differences.

Gender Differences Research

Lenton (1995), in a comparison of feminist theory to systems theory (Straus, 1973), reported that the data in the Canadian Violence Against Women Survey supports the culture of male dominance as central to the etiology of wife abuse but insufficient by itself. She recommended combining gender with other variables. She also critiqued research focusing on only one gender as unable to contribute to the literature on gender differences. Instead, she recommended measuring men and women equally in victim studies and in perpetrator studies to compare the two gender groups on relevant characteristics. Comparing male and female self-reports of perpetration has the greatest chance of elucidating gender differences.

In a review of gender difference research on psychological abuse, Murphy and Cascardi (1999) found equivalent amounts of psychological abuse by men and women in ordinary situations but much more male than female psychological abuse in violent situations. It is interesting that reciprocal verbal abuse may be healthier and less risky than one-sided abuse. Women tended to report more psychological abuse than men

regardless of whether they or their partners were the perpetrators. To compare male and female self-reports, interpretations of results must consider this gender difference. According to Murphy and Cascardi, women's definition of emotional abuse may be more inclusive or they may be more willing or able to identify and disclose such events than men.

In their research review, Cascardi and Vivian (1995) reported evidence of gender differences in reports of how violent fights began. Women reported that they challenged men's authority or confronted men about undesirable behavior before the men became violent (also see Dobash & Dobash, 1984). Men reported that violence began because they lost control. These researchers interviewed married couples. Men and women were asked about both victimization and perpetration of violence. Regardless of the severity of the violent incident, women reported that their husbands engaged in five to eight times more psychological coercion leading up to the physical incident. Men reported equal amounts of psychological coercion by themselves and their wives. Both partners agreed that physical violence by men followed psychologically coercive acts by men. In fact, coercion was the reason men gave most often for the escalation. Women more often reported that severe physical aggression was self-defense. Aggressive men attributed their abuse to drinking alcohol more often than aggressive women, and aggressive women were more likely to apologize than men. Female victims reported numerous injuries, while male victims reported no injuries. Female perpetrators agreed that their partners were not injured.

The small number of studies leaves a gap in our understanding of gender differences in domestic violence. Dobash and Dobash (1984) suggested that this

systematic lack of attention to gender in studies of violence is based on the erroneous assumption that all violent incidents can be interpreted similarly to fighting contests between two males. However, because men are socialized to be aggressive and women are socialized to inhibit aggression, gender role socialization suggests a greater risk for perpetration of abuse by men. Whether this applies to psychological abuse is unknown.

Attachment Theory

Violence in romantic relationships may be due, in part, to the closeness of these relationships. Weis (1989) identified the nature of the relationship between perpetrator and victim as the most important factor to be studied.

Internal Working Models

By emphasizing how persons in close relationships negotiate and cope with experiences of insecurity, separation, and loss, Bowlby's (1969/1982, 1973, 1979, 1980, 1988) attachment theory describes individual reactions to connection and separation. Bowlby theorized that early attachment relationships result in working models of "self" and "other" that influence adult relationships. Internal working models of relationships are cognitive schema providing default reactions to stressful relationship situations. These mental representations are relatively stable and impact the ability to maintain satisfying intimate relationships and the ability to be autonomous (Ainsworth, 1989).

Adult Romantic Attachments

Attachment theory has been applied to adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In particular, conditions that threaten the future of relationships, such as violence, are likely to activate attachment behavior (Feeney, 1999). Patterns of cognitive and affective responses have been clustered into attachment styles. Theoretically,

attachment styles represent distinguishable expectations of relationships that may be related to internal working models but are based on observable or reported behavior. Whereas internal working models are often immutable, attachment orientations or expectations may be more amenable to intervention (see Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001). For this reason, studying attachment orientations yields information most relevant to therapists.

Adult attachment researchers (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991) have suggested four categories with different combinations of self and other models (see Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). The healthiest category is a secure adult attachment style. Secure people are comfortable with intimacy and aloneness and able to traverse effectively and flexibly between the two. Internal models of self and other are positive. Insecure attachments take three forms: preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. The preoccupied and dismissing orientations are not optimal but represent alternative means of attaching developed in early environments that were less than conducive. Preoccupied people may compulsively seek approval from others, over rely on intimate connections, and suffer from developmental disruptions in separation and independence. Self models are negative and other models are positive. Dismissing people prefer not to depend on others and may be overly self-reliant and detached. Their other models are negative, but their self models are positive. Fearful adult attachment is often associated with disorganized attachment in infants, which represents a high-risk category that may be unattached. Both self and other models are negative.

Attachment categories have been examined for underlying continuous dimensions that help explain variation within and across self-report categories (Simpson & Rholes,

1998). The two continuous dimensions are "anxiety" and "avoidance." Secure individuals are low in avoidance and anxiety, while fearful individuals are high in both dimensions. Dismissing individuals report high avoidance but low anxiety, and preoccupied individuals report the opposite (Bartholomew, 1990). Anxiety is related to fears of abandonment or insufficient love, while avoidance is related to fear of intimacy or lack of emotional expression. There are methodological and conceptual advantages to studying attachment dimensions instead of categories or types (see Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Fraley & Waller, 1998; Lopez & Brennan, 2000).

Conflict, Affect, and Cognition

Adult attachment research addresses three relevant aspects of romantic relationships: (a) conflict, (b) affect regulation, and (c) cognitive distortions. Attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety predict different behavioral outcomes in romantic relationships, especially when cognitive misinterpretations and/or emotional distress are included in mediational models (Collins, 1996).

Anxious attachment contributed to negative feelings and negative appraisals of self-confidence in emotion management, while avoidant attachment was related to escalation and anger (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001). Attachment and level of conflict interact. In high-conflict relationships, preoccupied (anxious) people had the most complex expectations, especially in terms of positive expectations (Fishtein, Pietromonaco, & Barrett, 1999). This was similar to previous findings (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Attachment anxiety and discussing major (vs. minor) problems led to more anger and hostility but also more positive perceptions of partners afterwards.

Attachment avoidance was related to low levels of supportiveness and warmth, especially when discussing major problems.

Affect regulation differs across attachment styles. Insecurely attached people and men have shown more difficulty directly expressing emotion (Searles & Meara, 1999). This gender difference might contribute to risk of psychological abuse. Affect regulation has been associated with aggressive behavior (Eisenberg, 2000) and described as a mediator of behavior in attachment relationships (Lopez & Brennan, 2000). Attachment theory suggests that people use "others as agents of affect regulation" (Fuendeling, 1998, p. 307), with avoidance and anxiety predicting different methods of signaling and responding:

> Avoidant individuals tend not to perceive or respond to affective signals, whether of distress or of love and commitment. Similarly, they tend not [sic] signal their own distress to partners....Ambivalent [anxious] individuals, on the other hand, over-signal their passion and commitment but appear not to accurately perceive their partners' positive affective signals. (p. 311)

Avoidance results in fewer positive and more negative caregiving behaviors, while anxiety leads to excessive caregiving misaligned with the partner's needs (Kunce & Shaver, 1994). Therefore, avoidance may result in cold responses while anxiety may result in intrusive responses. Gender differences in and attachment styles of affect regulation may account for some variation in psychological abuse.

Another way to describe attachment differences involves cognitive distortion. Anxious attachment is associated with attributions of self-criticism or blame, perceptions of partners as experiencing low intimacy and commitment, and low defensiveness;

avoidance is associated with high levels of defensiveness (see Fuendeling, 1998). Though not all abuse occurs in the context of conflict (for discussion, see Johnson & Sacco, 1995), it is likely that both affect regulation and cognitive distortion are involved. According to psychodynamic theory, defense mechanisms manage affect by distorting cognition (see Vaillant, 1992). Attachment theory supports the empirical examination of defense mechanisms using information processing models of cognitive distortions (Bowlby, 1979, 1988); however, psychodynamic theory has contributed much to our understanding of specific types of defensiveness.

There is also evidence that cognitive distortions and defensiveness relate to violence. Apter et al. (1989) found that displacement, projection, and denial contributed to violent behavior. Projection and attachment have also been related. Mikulincer and Horesh (1999) found that anxious-ambivalent people project their own traits onto unknown others, perhaps in order to increase feelings of similarity and connectedness. Avoidant people projected their own unwanted traits onto others, perhaps to effectively maintain positive senses of self. This study used an elegant experimental design to capture these interesting effects. Given these findings, attachment avoidance and defensiveness may contribute to psychological abuse.

By definition, defensive processes are unconscious and therefore difficult to assess using self-report measures. However, two suitable measures were found, one related to splitting and the other to narcissism.

Defensive splitting. Splitting involves cognitive and perceptual processes and is "one of the common denominators in all defense mechanisms" (Grotstein, 1985, p. 16).

The individual deals with emotional conflict or internal or external stressors by

> compartmentalizing opposite affect states and failing to integrate the positive and negative qualities of the self or others into cohesive images. Because ambivalent affects cannot be experienced simultaneously, more balanced views and expectations of self or others are excluded from emotional awareness. (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 757)

Kernberg (1975/1985) theorized that splitting originates as "good" and "bad" internalized objects that interfere with the formation of a stable ego identity. In unhealthy developmental trajectories, differentiation of self and object, integration of positive and negative self-images, and integration of positive and negative object images may be disrupted, affecting autonomous and connective processes.

When splitting is used as a defense, affect-laden information is separated into good and bad categories rather than integrated. For example, a child is aware of a model of the parent as good and the child as bad (self-splitting), but excluded from awareness are negative attributes or perceptions of the parent (see Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton, 1995). Horowitz (1977) described splitting (or other-splitting) as the "tendency to place good attributes within the self-representation and to externalize bad attributes" (p. 550). "Badness" may be attributed to self or other, depending on whether internalization or externalization is the means of defense, resulting in unrealistic appraisals that lead to maladaptive relationship strategies. A more realistic sense of a relational interaction would involve recognition of both good and bad characteristics of self and other.

Securely attached persons have demonstrated better integration of constructs related to self and others than insecure persons (see Lopez, 2001; also Mikulincer, 1995). Two studies linked splitting to insecure attachment (Lopez, 2001; Lopez, Fuendeling,

Thomas, & Sagula, 1997). Dutton (1998) described splitting as a defense mechanism used by male batterers to manage rage. He studied borderline personality and related primitive defenses (similar to splitting) and found strong correlations with domestic violence.

Defensive narcissism. Narcissism is not limited to people with narcissistic personality disorder but involves both healthy and defensive processes found in most people. Narcissistic traits involve defensive cognitive distortions. Narcissists are perfectionistic, lack empathy, experience intense envy, and are unable to be autonomous or intimate (Fischer, 1989; Klein, 1989). Masterson's (1988, 1993) theory of narcissism emphasizes a false self that relates to others through defenses, deceptions, and "distortions in the normal balance of investment in self and others" (Klein, 1989, p. 34). Defensiveness narcissism may be a mechanism used to express insecure attachment, especially avoidance. Love is directed toward the self, and hate or aggression is directed toward important others (Kernberg, 1975/1985). Because partners may be targets, narcissism may result in psychological abuse.

Expressions of aggression against important others protect the person from separation anxiety and involve attacks of intense rage that "contaminate the entire relationship" (Kernberg, 1975/1985, p. 267). Narcissistic rage is unlikely to occur in adults because of actual interpersonal events; narcissists are usually out of contact with reality. Rather, the narcissists' perceptions that they are not being sufficiently acknowledged are the cause of the aggression (Fischer, 1989). If perpetrators of psychological abuse are narcissistic, distorted perception may be a precipitant.

Narcissism was related to interpersonal hostility in one study (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). A series of studies (Carroll, Hoenigmann-Stovall, & Whitehead, 1996a, 1996b) found that narcissism was likely to elicit interpersonal rejection and reduced interest in interacting with the narcissistic person. Brennan and Shaver (1998) found that narcissism related most strongly to fearful and preoccupied attachment, followed by dismissing attachment. Narcissism was least related to secure attachment.

Dutton (1998) described narcissism as an origin of male batterers' rage. Numerous studies found narcissism in batterers (Dutton et al., 1996; Gondolf, 1999; Hamberger & Hastings, 1986, as reviewed by Dutton, 1998; Tweed & Dutton, 1998) Dutton and Starzomski (1997) compared personality traits commonly found in abusers with uses of the power and control wheel (DAIP, date unknown). Aspects of power and control were intercorrelated and personality disturbances (primarily borderline traits) were related to psychological abuse.

Violent Adult Attachments

Only one study was found that explicitly integrated feminist and attachment theories in the study of domestic violence, though numerous studies linked insecure attachment and physical violence. Few attachment studies related to psychological abuse were found, but several projects looked at related concepts, such as controlling behavior or hostility.

In a study of male perpetrators that integrated attachment and feminist theories, Mauricio and Gormley (2001) found that insecure attachment and need for dominance interacted to predict physical violence. Neither attachment nor dominance alone significantly related to violence, but insecure men with high needs for dominance

reported committing significantly more acts of violence than secure men with low dominance needs. This preliminary study underscores the value of integrating feminist and adult attachment theories to explain domestic violence committed by men. Gender differences in this interaction remain unknown.

In a review of research using attachment interviews (see Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 1999), several attachment categories related to physical violence. Categories with elevated frequency of perpetration or victimization included: (a) disorganized/controlling, which is comparable to the fearful category and related to unresolved trauma in childhood; (b) preoccupied, which is overwhelmed by trauma; and (c) "cannot classify," those interviews that defy classification. Batterers seemed more likely to have contradictory states of mind associated with the "cannot classify" category, while abused women expressed unresolved (fearful) or overwhelmed (preoccupied) mental states. Another study (Dutton et al., 1994) compared abusive men in all four adult attachment categories to a control group of men and found that the fearful category was related to abuse, the preoccupied category was somewhat related, and attachment dimensions of anxiety and avoidance were both related to abuse. Abuse included physical and psychological components. Dismissing attachment was not related to abuse in the first study, but the avoidance dimension was related in the second study. The guardedness involved in this type of insecure attachment may explain discrepancies in findings.

Mayseless (1991) theorized that courtship violence is a form of anger and protest over separations in adult attachments that serves the function of regulating intimacy. She asserted that both avoidance and anxiety lead to violence. Avoidance results in passive-aggressive hostility and criticism, while anxiety results in aggression, jealousy,

possessiveness, and wanting control over the partner. There is some evidence to support this theory. College students' attachments to their parents were related to hostility in their dating relationships in one study (Morrison, Goodlin-Jones, & Urquiza, 1997). Securely attached adults reported less attacking and protesting behavior in their intimate relationships than insecurely attached adults. There is evidence that preoccupied and fearful adults are controlling and aggressive in their romantic relationships (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998; see also Kunce & Shaver, 1994). Empirical evidence suggests that distorted perceptions and cognitive processes are involved in this violent behavior. One study (Kesner, Julian, & McKenny, 1997) found evidence of perpetrator distortions. Men with insecure attachments (to parents) were more likely to be violent toward female partners than secure men. It was hypothesized that these men perceived their partners to be insensitive and inappropriate like their early caregivers, though the study found that the female partners were not insensitive to the men's needs. Abusive behavior might be better described as a form of protest over *perceived* separations. Insecure attachments entail risk factors; efforts to regulate intimacy might have the consequence of destroying intimacy if expectations of relationships are distorted.

Babcock, Jacobson, Gottman, and Yerington (2000) used attachment interviews to categorize husbands and found a significant difference between violent and nonviolent men. Violent men were most often classified in an insecure attachment category while nonviolent men were most often classified secure. Both preoccupied and dismissing men were more domineering than secure men, attempting to gain compliance and submission from their wives through invalidating, patronizing, and lecturing them. Further, dismissing men were most controlling and distancing (using "stonewalling" tactics) while

preoccupied men were least distancing. Dismissing men were most contemptuous, and preoccupied men were most belligerent. These researchers concluded that dismissing and preoccupied men differ in their motivations for violence: (a) dismissing men are more antisocial and more instrumental and deliberate in the use of violence to get what they want from others; and (b) preoccupied men are more expressive, using violence to reduce negative affect and because they lack strategies for disengaging from conflict. An understanding of the effects of attachment style differences on psychological abuse in both genders is needed.

Murphy and Hoover (1999) found that insecure attachment was associated with perpetration of psychological abuse by females. In a study of college females and psychological abuse, O'Hearn and Davis (1997) found that secure women both received and perpetrated the least emotional abuse, while preoccupied/anxious women received and perpetrated the most. Interview ratings supported these findings but self-report ratings did not. In contrast to past studies of men (Dutton et al., 1994), the more fearful women were, the more likely they were to report receiving emotional abuse, the greater the impact on them, and the less likely they were to have inflicted it. Dismissing women self-reported high levels of inflicting abuse, and the researchers recommend further investigation into this unexpected phenomenon. The underlying dimensions of attachment anxiety and avoidance may contribute to perpetration of psychological abuse in different ways for men and women.

Integration of Theory

Feminist domestic violence research focuses on why men beat female partners, while attachment researchers focus on psychopathology leading to violence, why couples

are involved in violent interactions, and why women stay with abusive men (see Burgess & Draper, 1989; Dutton, 1996). Feminists (e.g., Browne, 1993) critique studies focusing on why women stay in abusive relationships as neglecting the causes of male violence. Examining causes of violent behavior related to perpetrator characteristics is compatible with both theories.

The overlap between gender and individual differences is especially applicable to the study of domestic violence. Some individual variables that predict domestic violence, such as personality disorders, also occur with differing frequencies across gender groups (Renzetti, 1996). It is unknown if there are gender differences in the use of various defense mechanisms; however, it might be surmised from gender role socialization that men are more likely to use externalizing defenses such as narcissism and other-splitting while women are more likely to use internalizing defenses such as self-splitting. Defense mechanisms are designed to protect negative or vulnerable attributes, and defenses may even create the appearance of opposite characteristics. For instance, attachment avoidance is related to highest levels of anxiety though avoidant people typically deny discomfort (see Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995). Defensive presentations may contribute to the enactment of psychological abuse.

Adult attachment theory is used to describe individual differences in (a) expectations of romantic relationships, (b) means of getting needs met by partners, and (c) understandings of the self and the other in interactions. This approach is supplemented by components of feminist theory, especially sociological gender differences and the influence of gender role socialization. In addition, defense mechanisms as described by psychodynamic theory help clarify aspects of avoidant attachment related to guardedness.

This study examines adult attachment style, gender, and defenses as antecedents to psychological abuse.

Attachment, Gender, and Defenses as Predictors of Abuse

No studies were found to integrate attachment, gender, and defenses to examine psychological abuse, nor did any studies consider defense mechanisms as contributors to psychological abuse. Three papers were found that integrate adult attachment and gender in efforts to explain domestic violence, with definitions inclusive of psychological abuse.

In a review of research, Stosny (1995) reported that men with attachment deficits were more vulnerable to negative aspects of gender socialization. As a result, insecure men were more likely than insecure women to be aggressive, to express all negative affect as anger, and to have difficulties operating within the context of an intimate relationship. This author characterized both fears over separation and fears of becoming closer to someone as threats that activate attachment schemas and incite violence in male batterers. The inability of insecure men to manage intimate relationship responsibilities combined with a masculine imperative to be competent leads abusers to blame female partners in order to defensively externalize negative affect.

Two recent studies supporting these characterizations were found. In the first, Roberts and Noller (1998) applied attachment theory and systems theory to both male and female partners. Attachment was related to domestic violence along the dimension of anxiety over abandonment but not along the avoidant dimension (discomfort with closeness). Anxious men and women were more likely to use violence against partners, and women reported more violence against anxious partners. The only interaction between two partners' attachment styles as a significant predictor of violence was for

anxious perpetrators with avoidant partners. These researchers concluded that couples with one anxious and one avoidant partner are at greater risk of violence. This finding seems to conflict with earlier work that found anxious female and avoidant male partners to be as stable as secure-secure couples, a finding that was interpreted as gender role adherence contributing to couple stability (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). The data in this study (Roberts & Noller) more precisely support the conclusion that anxiety is a risk factor for perpetration against avoidant partners. Interestingly, this implies that in some cases, gender role reversal (anxious male perpetrators with avoidant female partners) may contribute to violence. These researchers further characterized partner withdrawal as provoking violent behavior, a conceptualization that blames victims and risks gender bias. Two alternative conceptualizations are better supported by previous research: (a) those fearing abandonment misperceive their partners as withdrawing, or (b) escalation prior to the violence involved psychological abuse that created more distance in the relationship or resulted in the partner pulling away.

In a more recent study (Hoover et al., 1999), emotional abuse was the outcome measure. Men and women were compared on both self-reports and partner-reports. Gender and self- versus partner-report had main effects and an interaction effect. Gender had a main effect on two emotional abuse subscales, Dominance/Intimidation and Hostile Withdrawal. Women tended to report more of these types of emotional abuse than men whether reporting about themselves or their partners; therefore, interpretations emphasize differences in self-report rather than actual differences to reduce potential gender bias. Self- versus partner-report had a main effect on Denigration, with both men and women reporting themselves as more denigrating than their partners.

The interaction between gender and self- versus partner-report significantly affected the Dominance/Intimidation and Restrictive Engulfment subscales (Hoover et al., 1999). There was agreement across self- and partner-reports that men were more likely to use domination and intimidation. Similarly, women were reported to use Restrictive Engulfment more often than men, whether women were self-reporting or men were reporting about female partners. Gender was tested as a moderator of the relationship between attachment and emotional abuse. Gender and anxious attachment interacted to predict emotional abuse overall and the subscale of Hostile Withdrawal. When levels of attachment anxiety were high, women reported being more emotionally abusive than men.

Summary

Self-reported perpetration of psychological abuse is limited in accuracy and scope, but clinicians often depend exclusively on self-reports and individual observations to assess risk. Assessment of associated factors might help, such as insecure adult attachment style, male gender, and the use of externalizing defense mechanisms. This study measures self-reports of perpetration, attachment style, and defenses in both genders to clarify risk of psychological abusiveness.

All of these factors are in keeping with feminist principles that perpetrators be held accountable for their abusive behavior rather than blaming situations or victims. How these factors interact with each other to contribute to psychological abuse remains unclear. Risk factors may vary with type of psychological abuse strategy or may depend on the interaction between attachment style and gender. Male gender is deemed a risk factor in general, especially for dominance strategies.

Insecure attachment style increases the risk that romantic relationships will be mismanaged. Protest behavior might occur over perceived abandonment in anxious attachments or over perceived engulfment in avoidant attachments. Insecurity also increases the likelihood that negative aspects of gender role socialization will manifest in behaviors or attitudes. Many men may find aggressive behavior acceptable. Because men are socialized to externalize problems, they may be at greater risk of using defense mechanisms that negatively distort perceptions of intimate partners. Attachment avoidance puts people at more risk of using defense mechanisms that distance them from important others. Depending on insecure attachment style, gender, and defenses, psychological abuse strategies employed may vary. Interaction effects between attachment, gender, and defense may differ depending on whether dominance or emotional abuse is the behavioral and attitudinal outcome.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to extend research on domestic violence to address psychological aspects of abuse relevant to individual assessment and intervention. College students were surveyed to extract information about risk factors at this crucial stage of developing intimate relationships. Gender differences in self-reported psychological tactics were investigated rather than focusing exclusively on male perpetrators and simultaneously gathering female victim or observer reports. Feminist principles were integrated with attachment theory to interpret results.

Adult attachment research is also extended. The contribution of adult attachment style to psychological abuse in romantic relationships needs further explication. The model tested included defense mechanisms that may mediate or moderate the relationship

between attachment and psychological abuse. These defensive processes integrate affect regulation with cognitive distortion. Defense mechanisms were theorized to help capture contributions of attachment avoidance that have gone undetected because people high in avoidance are also highly defensive. High levels of avoidance combined with high levels of externalizing defenses (such as narcissism and other-splitting) were expected to predict psychological abuse. In addition, defensive processes were expected to explain how anxious attachment leads to abuse. Anxious attachment may produce severe mismanagement strategies in romantic relationships that can be described as the use of primitive defenses such as self-splitting, an internalizing defense expected in more women than men.

Hypotheses

In the model tested, gender and adult attachment dimensions are key predictor variables expected to have both direct and indirect (i.e., moderating) effects on psychological abuse by way of their interaction with each other and with defensive processes. Splitting and narcissism are also predictor variables expected to mediate the relationships between adult attachment indices and abuse. Psychological abuse is the dependent variable. Adult attachment variables include anxiety and avoidance. Psychological abuse variables include indices of emotional abuse and dominance. In general, this study addresses a basic question: How do insecure attachment, gender, and defensiveness interrelate to predict perpetration of psychological abuse in romantic relationships?

It was expected that men would report higher levels of dominance than women and that highly anxious adults would be most emotionally abusive. Gender was expected

to moderate the relationship between attachment and psychological abuse. Men with high levels of avoidance and anxiety were expected to be more dominant than secure men, while insecurely attached women (i.e., avoidant and anxious) were expected to be less dominant than secure women. Anxious and avoidant women were expected to be more emotionally abusive than more secure women, while a similar but weaker relationship was expected in men. Narcissism and splitting were theorized to be positively related to psychological abuse. Self-splitting was hypothesized to predict more psychological abuse in anxious people than other-splitting. Other-splitting was expected to be more strongly related to avoidance than to anxiety. Splitting and narcissism were anticipated to partially mediate the relationship between attachment anxiety and psychological abuse and to moderate the relationship between avoidance and abuse. Avoidant people who also report high levels of defensive distortion would admit more psychological abuse (see Figures 1 and 2).

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Participants

Michigan State University undergraduate students were recruited from education, criminal justice, and other academic courses as well as from residence halls. Efforts were made to recruit equal numbers of men and women who had been involved in heterosexual dating relationships. Although 135 participants completed the survey, eight were eliminated; of those eliminated, three had never had a dating relationship, one had only gay relationships, and four neglected to answer a full page of items. In the analyses, 127 participants were considered. Using Cohen's (1977) formula for power (.80), an alpha level set at .05, and an effect size of .15, it was calculated that 89 participants were needed to examine 7 independent variables; therefore, there was sufficient power.

There were 66 women (52%) and 61 men (48%) in the sample. They were predominantly American citizens (USA; 98%) with a few International students (2%). Most were White (80.6%), though other racial and ethnic groups were represented (African 9.7%, Asian and Hispanic 3.2% each, Arabic and Native 1.6% each). The mean age was 20 with a range from 18 to 41. Most were underclassmen (59.8%) but all were registered for undergraduate courses. Most were recruited from education courses (61.1%), though a substantial number were recruited from residence halls (33.3%). Most were heterosexual (98.4%), but a few were bisexual (1.6%). Most were either in a serious relationship (41.7%) or casually dating (20.5%), though many were not currently dating anyone (33.1%). Only a few (2.4%) were living together and reported being committed to

their relationship. The mean length of the current relationship was 22 months, although the range was substantial (from less than one month to 26 years).

Procedures

The study was described as concerned with how people act in dating relationships. During group administrations in classroom settings or residence hall meetings, participants completed informed consent forms (see Appendix A) and survey packets containing measures described below. Adult attachment and defense measures were counterbalanced with psychological abuse measures and demographic questions during survey administration to control for possible order effects. The participants recruited from education courses received some partial course credit, and those recruited from residence halls received slices of pizza. It took participants approximately 35 minutes to complete the survey packet.

Measures

Participant gender was identified using a demographic questionnaire. To control for differences in levels of stress, a measure of personal problems was used. There were measures of adult attachment, splitting, narcissism, and two measures related to psychological abuse. Multiple measures of psychological abuse, including measures that contain multiple dimensions, increase the accuracy of self-report data as recommended by feminists (Smith, 1994).

Demographics

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was developed to gather data regarding gender, age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and education level. Number of dating relationships, current relationship status, and length of time in the most recent

relationship (or since it ended) were requested. Students were also tracked as to whether they were recruited from education, criminal justice, or other courses or from residence halls.

Personal Problems Inventory (PPI; Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise, 1975; see Appendix C)

A version of the PPI modified by Ponce and Atkinson (1989) was used to assess students' self-reported levels of stress. Participants rated each of 20 problems often experienced by college students (e.g., alcohol use, conflicts with parents, trouble studying) according to its severity in their current lives using a 6-point rating scale (1= not at all a problem; 6 = very significant problem). Ratings were summed to produce a total score.

The original 15-item scale yielded four reliable factors: performance anxiety, interpersonal problems, intrapersonal problems, and substance abuse (Johnson & Holland, 1986). The added items were designed to address concerns of non-mainstream students, and the 20-item scale yielded two factors: academic/career and personal/social concerns (Ponce & Atkinson, 1989). Lopez, Melendez, Sauer, Berger, and Wyssmann (1998) reported adequate reliability for the scale in their sample of college students (α = .83); they also found that severity of personal problems was significantly higher among those students who had previously sought and received counseling. Lopez and Gormley (in press) reported high reliability in a sample of college freshmen (α = .87); they found that insecurely attached freshmen reported the most problems, securely attached freshmen reported the least problems, and those who changed attachment style during freshman year reported moderate levels of problems, with those changing from insecure

to secure reporting a decrease in problems. The PPI was reliable in the current sample (α = .87; see Wilkinson & The APA Task Force on Statistical Inference, 1999).

Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; see Appendix D)

The 36-item ECR-R provides continuous measures of the adult attachment dimensions of Avoidance (18 items) and Anxiety (18 items). The original items (ECR) were derived from an extensive review of adult romantic attachment self-report measures. According to Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998), over 300 items were compiled and tested, and those selected were most strongly associated with the two components (r = .95 for both). The components (Anxiety and Avoidance) are almost unrelated (r = .11). The ECR is highly reliable (Avoidance α = .94; Anxiety α = .91) and has construct validity at r = .95 when compared to categories on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), a commonly used single-item measure of attachment categories. Further construct validity is evident in studies that show that anxiety and avoidance are related in expected ways to self-other differentiation, self-concealment, emotional empathy, need for approval (Lopez, 2001), work stress intensity, symptomatic distress (Schirmer & Lopez, 2001), touch aversion, promiscuity, and postcoital emotions (Brennan et al., 1998).

Further item analysis was done to develop the ECR-R, the version used in the present study. According to Fraley et al. (2000), the ECR compared favorably to three other measures of adult attachment in representing each trait continuum. Some items were replaced to enhance measurement precision up to 100% without expanding the number of items. Test-retest correlations for the ECR-R subscales ranged from .93 to .95,

far exceeding three alternative multiple-item self-report measures and their subscales (r = .44 to .82). In addition, stability across time was statistically simulated, and the ECR-R demonstrated greatest stability of the four measures. Both test-retest reliability and stability were improved in the ECR-R over the ECR.

Avoidance is characterized as discomfort with dependence, and Anxiety is characterized as the failure to explore without support. Avoidance items include: "I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down" and "I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close." Anxiety items include: "I worry a lot about my relationships" and "I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me." Participants are asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 = Disagree Strongly, 7 = Agree Strongly).

In the current sample, the ECR-R was highly reliable (α = .93), as were the subscales (anxiety α = .91; avoidance α = .92). The subscales were moderately correlated (r = .40), which may indicate a difference between the ECR-R and the ECR. Attachment categories were calculated, and 40% of the sample was secure (n = 50), 24% were fearful (n = 31), 19% were dismissing (n = 24), and 17% were preoccupied (n = 22). These frequencies were similar to other college student samples that used the RQ to categorize adult attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan & Morris, 1997; Duggan & Brennan, 1994; Lopez & Gormley, in press; Searles & Meara, 1999).

Splitting Index (SI; Gould, Prentice, & Ainslie, 1996; see Appendix E)

The 24-item SI measures the propensity to use ego splitting as a defense (see Kernberg, 1975/1985). There are three subscales related to Self, Family, and Other that were derived using factor analysis. Only Self-splitting (8 items) and Other-splitting (8

items) subscales will be used for this study, so there are 16 items. Items are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). A Self-splitting item is "I feel different about myself when I am with different people." An Other-splitting item is "I have doubts about my closest friends." The subscales are highly reliable (self-splitting α = .88 to .89; other-splitting α = .84 to .85). The two subscales were significantly intercorrelated (*r*s = .47 to .56). Test-retest results were shown to be stable over four weeks ($p < .001$, $r = .86$; self-splitting $r = .83$, other-splitting $r = .75$). Gender differences were not significant overall, but in one sample, women reported high self-splitting scores. The authors provided evidence of construct validity. Splitting was related to affect (positive, negative, and depressed), narcissistic and borderline personality features, and dogmatism, but not to intolerance of ambiguity or authoritarianism. Evidence of predictive validity was also found: (a) the SI differentiated borderline personality characteristics and severe psychopathology from less severe psychopathology and control groups, and (b) the SI differentiated between therapist-identified groups of clients who were either assessed as using splitting as a defense or not (Armbrust, 1997). In the current sample, the SI was reliable (α = .84), as were the subscales (self α = .74; other α = .85).

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979, 1981; see Appendix F)

The NPI is a forced-choice measure with subscales related to Authority, Entitlement, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Self-sufficiency, Superiority, and Vanity. This measure was normed on male and female college students, and is reliable for men and women of all ages (α = .83 overall; for males α = .84 and for females α = .82; R. Raskin, personal communication, January 8, 2001). Each subscale is a principal component, and the constructs have validity in relationship to observer reports (Raskin &

Terry, 1988). The construct of narcissism and each subscale also have convergent and discriminant validity in relationship to MMPI scales (Raskin & Novacek, 1989). Example items include: "I have a strong will to power" and "I can usually talk my way out of anything." A factor analysis of the NPI yielded three factors: grandiosity, self-sufficiency, and vanity. Loadings on the grandiosity factor included Authority, Entitlement, Exploitativeness, Exhibitionism, and Superiority (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). Though the most recent version of the complete measure has 40 items (R. Raskin, personal communication, January 8, 2001), the items related to grandiosity are of most interest to this study. Upon removing Self-sufficiency and Vanity items (Raskin & Terry, 1988), 31 items remain.

According to Watson and Biderman (1993), the NPI addresses the complex relationship between positive and negative aspects of narcissism through separate subscales. Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, and Entitlement were related to maladjustment, but Exhibitionism was also related to higher self-esteem. Only Entitlement and Exploitativeness were uncorrelated with self-esteem (Raskin et al., 1991). Entitlement was associated with needs for power and revenge (Raskin & Novacek, 1991). Authority, Superiority, Self-sufficiency, and Vanity were found to be less risky aspects of narcissism (Raskin & Novacek, 1989). Another study (Emmons, 1987) found four factors in a revised version of the test: Leadership/Authority (L/A), Self-absorption/Self-admiration (S/S), Superiority/Arrogance (S/A), and Exploitativeness/Entitlement (E/E). The E/E subscale was found to correlate with measures of maladaptive or pathological narcissism, and L/A was considered adaptive. E/E was specifically considered interpersonally maladaptive, while both E/E and S/S

were correlated with hostility (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). The NPI was reliable overall (α = .87) and the subscales had adequate reliability (L/A α = .69, S/S α = .81, S/A α = .70, E/E α = .68). The NPI and these subscales have been differentially correlated with various measures of narcissism (see Emmons). For example, E/E was related to an aggressive/sadistic interpersonal style as well as a rebellious/distrustful style (Emmons, 1984). To preserve the E/E subscale, it was necessary to return one item to the measure and to add one item (from Emmons), for a total of 33 items. This measure was reliable in the current sample (α = .81). The subscales were also reliable (grandiosity α = .81; E/E α = .65).

The Dominance Scale (TDS; Hamby, 1996; see Appendix G)

The 32-item Dominance Scale is a psychological abuse measure of Attitudes and behaviors involved in exerting power over a partner. Based in feminist theory, this scale relates to non-egalitarian and overly controlling approaches to relationships. Whether dominance is a form of psychological aggression or a predictor of psychological aggression is debated (see O'Leary, 1999). The three subscales are Authority, Restrictiveness, and Disparagement. Authority describes decision-making power, as in "Sometimes I have to remind my partner who's boss." Restrictiveness means intrusiveness into the partner's business, such as "I insist on knowing where my partner is at all times." Disparagement involves negative appraisals of the partner, such as the following item: "My partner doesn't have enough sense to make important decisions."

Factor loadings and item analysis resulted in reliable subscales (Authority α = .80, Restrictiveness α = .73, Disparagement α = .82). The Authority subscale is significantly and moderately correlated with the Restrictiveness (r = .38) and

Disparagement (r = .58) scales (both ps < .0001.). Evidence for construct validity was provided. All three subscales were significantly related to the psychological aggression subscale of the CTS2 (Authority r = .35, Restrictiveness r = .33, Disparagement r = .22). After multiple regression analysis, the Restrictiveness subscale was the one that remained a significant predictor of psychological aggression (β = .26, p < .01). The sample was college students in dating relationships, and validation efforts continue to expand the usefulness of this measure. TDS was reliable in the current sample (α = .89). The subscales were also reliable (authority α = .86; restrictiveness α = .70; disparagement α = .84).

Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (MMEA; Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Murphy, Hoover, & Taft, 1999; see Appendix H)

The MMEA is a measure of psychological abuse that was developed on samples of college students in dating relationships and that yielded four factors that correlate with physical aggression: Denigration, Dominance/Intimidation, Hostile Withdrawal, and Restrictive Engulfment. Samples of both males and females were used in the development of the study. Items were taken from the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (Tolman, 1989, 1999), the Psychological Aggression Scale of the CTS (Straus, 1979), and other sources. An attachment measure was used in the scale development study (see Murphy & Hoover).

Participants were asked to rate themselves (self) and partners on emotional abuse. Only responses regarding "self" were used in this analysis. Items are rated by frequency of occurrence in a recent six-month period, from "never" to "over twenty times." The

measure is reliable (α ranges = .83 to .89 for each subscale on self ratings). MMEA self-ratings are significantly related to independent measures of physical abuse.

According to Murphy et al. (1999), the measure was reduced to 28 items on the basis of confirmatory factor analysis. By relating subscales to interpersonal problems, additional construct validity was provided. In the two studies reported by the authors, all four subscales significantly and moderately relate to problems being vindictive, domineering, and intrusive. None of the subscales relate to being overly nurturing, exploitable, or nonassertive. In one sample of men, Hostile Withdrawal was the only subscale associated with social avoidance. Social desirability measures had limited associations with MMEA responses. Dominance/Intimidation and Denigration were strongly associated with physical abuse, while the other subscales had moderate associations.

Denigration (DN) is the use of direct verbal attacks designed to undermine partners' self-esteem. Dominance/Intimidation (D/I) tactics such as threats, property damage, and verbal abuse are directed at creating fear and submissiveness in partners. Hostile Withdrawal (HW) is a punishing withholding of emotional contact that makes partners feel insecure about the relationship. Restrictive Engulfment (RE) is the use of coercion to isolate partners and express possessiveness in order to maximize partner availability and dependence. Example items include: "Belittled the other person in front of other people" and "Became angry enough to frighten the other person." The measure of reports regarding "self" was highly reliable in the current sample (α = .95), as were the corresponding subscales (RE α = .85; DN α = .90; HW α = .89; D/I α = .88).

Data Analysis

Bivariate statistics were used to detect demographic differences in variables of interest so that background effects could be appropriately controlled. Gender differences in all primary variables, including psychological abuse subscales, were calculated and reported. Correlations among all independent and dependent variables were calculated for the entire sample and for each gender separately. The two measures of psychological abuse were moderately correlated (rs < .63; ps < .01; see Tables 2 and 3) but considered to measure different constructs. Therefore, separate models were tested for each outcome variable. Multivariate statistics included a series of multiple regressions used to test the proposed mediator-moderator models (Baron & Kenny, 1986). An alpha level of .05 was set.

In preparation for multiple regression, several assumptions must be met. First, it is assumed that the relationships being analyzed are linear and that all necessary variables are included in the model (Rencher, 1995). All independent-dependent variable relationships were observed visually and found to be linear rather than curvilinear. The inclusion of a potential confound, the stress variable, aids in ensuring that all necessary variables are in the model. Second, the assumption of independence (Shavelson, 1996) is met because participants are reporting their own behavior. If their partners happened to participate, this did not violate the assumption of independence because reports about partners were not included in the analysis.

Third, the shapes of the distributions of variables were inspected to see if they were normal (Shavelson, 1996). Three variables, stress, attachment avoidance, and emotional abuse, had slight positive skews. Only emotional abuse was determined to be

nonnormal after viewing Q-Q plots. Because this is a sample of a normal population, there are numerous participants with low levels and a few participants with high levels of emotionally abusive behavior. The tails of the emotional abuse variable did not conform to the trend (see Rencher, 1995); a split histogram showed that this was more a problem in the male than the female sample. Although the means were similar, men had a wider range of responses and dispersion than women (see Table 1). In the entire sample, there was a thick tail at the low end and a thin tail at the high end.

Fourth, error variances were tested to see if they were equal, and residuals were observed to check whether error terms were correlated (Shavelson, 1996); that is, the final regression model for dominance was plotted to observe residuals in relationship to predicted scores, and all assumptions appeared to be met. However, emotional abuse residuals showed heteroscedacity and some nonnormality at the high ends. Though error terms were uncorrelated, error variances were unequal. Several outliers at upper levels were inspected and found to be reports of high levels of emotional abuse. To address this issue, transformation of the data is recommended (Draper & Smith, 1981; Shavelson). When the emotional abuse variable was transformed with a logarithmic function, Levene's test of homogeneity of variance and a Q-Q plot demonstrated homoscedacity and normality. The hierarchical regressions were run using the transformed variable, and the same primary variables were significant (presented in Table 8), indicating that the initial procedure was arguably robust to these violations of the assumptions.

Fifth, multicollinearity between attachment anxiety, stress, and self-splitting was a concern. Though they were only moderately intercorrelated ($rs < .64$; $ps < .01$; see Tables 2 and 3), regression was used to examine multivariate effects. Although these three

variables were significant in predicting each other, only moderate overlap was found (R^2 = .408). Therefore, multicollinearity was ruled out (Lewis-Beck, 1980).

Continuous variables were centered in preparation for creating and testing interaction terms (Aiken & West, 1991; Holmbeck, 1997). The control variable, stress level, was added first. To test hypotheses, subsequent variables were entered in the order planned (Wampold & Freund, 1987). Gender was entered second. Attachment avoidance and anxiety were entered third as a block. Fourth, gender × avoidance and gender × anxiety interaction terms were entered. Fifth, narcissism, self-splitting, and other-splitting were entered as a block. Sixth, a block of interaction terms followed: avoidance × narcissism, avoidance × self-splitting, and avoidance × other-splitting. The step with the last change in significance for relationships tested was retained as the final model. This process was repeated for each outcome variable. The contributions of variables to the explanation of psychological abuse and the effects of independent variables on each other in terms of mediation and moderation were considered (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Demographic variables were assessed for their effects on the variables of interest. More women were recruited from education courses and more men were recruited from residence halls [χ^2 (1, N = 127) = 49.69, $p < .001$]. To check the effects of gender and recruitment on primary variables, 2 x 2 analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used (with the alpha level set at .01). Because none of the interactions between gender and recruitment were significant, the effects of recruitment on variables of interest were assumed to be consistent across gender groups. In addition, none of the main effects of gender or recruitment demonstrated significant differences in relationship to primary variables.

Gender differences in all primary variables were examined using descriptive statistics (see Table 1). Men reported a wider range of problem levels or stress; a higher mean and wider range of narcissism; greater dispersion and range in dominance; and a higher mean, dispersion, and range in emotional abuse. Men's upper ranges on stress, narcissism, dominance, and emotional abuse measures were higher than women's. Most notably, women's high scores on emotional abuse did not exceed 73, while men had scores as high as 155. Men had more above-average reports of dominance than women (the average score of 64 could be gained without admitting dominance). Almost all students reported some emotional abusiveness, and a subgroup of men reported frequent and severe emotional abusiveness.

When the effects of gender and recruitment on subscales of psychological abuse and narcissism variables were examined with 2 x 2 ANOVAs (alpha level = .01), the interactions between gender and recruitment were nonsignificant. Therefore, the effects of recruitment on subscale scores were assumed to be consistent across gender groups. Only gender had a significant main effect on subscale scores. Gender had a main effect on the exploitative-entitled aspect of narcissism [$F(1, 127) = 10.01, p < .01$] and the authority aspect of dominance [$F(1, 127) = 6.98, p < .01$). Men on average reported more exploitative-entitled attitudes and more misuse of authority in romantic relationships than women (see Table 2). Though men had higher means and standard deviations in all subscales, group differences were significant only in the two subscales mentioned above.

Correlational analyses were used to examine interrelationships of primary continuous variables (see Table 3). Because stress level was moderately related to both outcome variables, this variable was controlled in subsequent analyses. As expected, attachment anxiety and avoidance were interrelated, self- and other-splitting were interrelated, and the two psychological abuse measures were interrelated. Attachment anxiety had a small but significant relationship with both psychological abuse variables (dominance, $r = .23, p < .01$; emotional abuse, $r = .25, p < .01$). Attachment avoidance was moderately and significantly related to dominance ($r = .33, p < .01$) but not emotional abuse. Narcissism and splitting were related to both outcome variables. Neither anxiety nor avoidance was related to narcissism. Attachment anxiety was positively related to stress, self- and other-splitting, dominance, and emotional abuse, while attachment avoidance was related to all of these variables except emotional abuse.

Gender differences in bivariate relationships were examined by running separate correlations (see Table 4). There was a stronger relationship between the dependent variables for men, and stress was significantly related to the dependent variables only in men. None of the primary variables significantly correlated with emotional abuse among women, and only attachment anxiety and other-splitting correlated with dominance. Among men, narcissism was significantly related to both psychological abuse variables, attachment anxiety and self- and other-splitting were related to emotional abuse, and attachment avoidance was related to dominance. Narcissism was significantly related negatively to self-splitting and attachment avoidance in women but not men. Attachment anxiety and avoidance were significantly related to self- and other-splitting in women; in men, attachment anxiety was related to both types of splitting but attachment avoidance was only correlated with self-splitting. Both self- and other-splitting were significantly related to emotional abuse in men but not women, while both forms of splitting were related to dominance in women but not men.

To further examine insecure attachment orientations as they related to psychological abuse and narcissism subscales, separate correlations by gender were inspected (see Table 5). Only significant relationships are described. For women, attachment anxiety had a small, positive relationship to disparagement, and attachment avoidance had a small, positive relationship to misuse of authority and a small negative relationship to grandiosity. For men, attachment anxiety had a small relationship to uses of intimidation and restrictive engulfment and moderate relationships to restrictiveness and hostile withdrawal. Attachment avoidance in men was moderately related to misuse of authority, disparagement, and exploitative-entitlement. Attachment avoidance was

related to misuse of authority in both genders. Attachment anxiety was the only primary predictor related to restrictiveness, restrictive engulfment, hostile withdrawal, and the use of intimidation, though only in men. Attachment anxiety in women and attachment avoidance in men were related to disparagement. Attachment avoidance in women was negatively related to grandiose aspects of narcissism, while attachment avoidance in men was related to exploitative-entitled aspects of narcissism. Neither insecure attachment style related to denigration in either gender.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Test of Model Predicting Dominance Scores

Summaries of regression analyses for dominance are shown in Table 6. Only steps involving a change in significance are shown in the tables. At step 1, stress was significantly and positively related to dominance. Stress alone explained 14% of the variance in dominance ($R^2 = .136, p < .001$). Higher stress levels predicted more endorsement of use of dominance strategies. Also shown at step 1 in Table 6, gender was significantly predictive of dominance scores. Gender explained an additional 3% of the variance in dominance after controlling for stress level ($\Delta R^2 = .029, p < .001$). Men demonstrated higher dominance scores than women.

Attachment avoidance was shown to be a better predictor of dominance than gender in step 2. Attachment avoidance was significantly predictive of dominance. The more attachment avoidance was reported, the more dominance was reported. Insecure attachment orientations explained an additional 4% of the variation in dominance (see Table 6). However, it was the interaction between gender and avoidance shown in step 3 that remained significantly predictive throughout the analyses. The more avoidant men

were, the more likely they were to use dominance strategies (see Figure 3). The same was not true for women. The gender-attachment interactions explained an additional 7% of the variance in dominance. It is interesting to note that the gender-anxiety interaction had a negative effect on dominance, though this variable was not significant in the model.

The defense variables are shown in step 4 (Table 6). Although narcissism did not have the predicted mediator or moderator relationships with anxiety and avoidance, it did significantly predict dominance. As more narcissism was reported, dominance scores increased. Narcissism and splitting variables contributed a unique 8% to explaining variation in dominance scores. Interactions between avoidance and defense mechanisms did not have significant effects and did not improve the model, and so they were removed.

In the final model, three variables had moderate effects in significantly predicting dominance, including stress ($\beta = .35$, $p < .01$), the gender-avoidance interaction ($\beta = .35$, $p < .01$), and narcissism ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$). Higher stress levels predicted more use of dominance in romantic relationships; however, after controlling for level of stress, other primary variables had substantial effects. The effect of one insecure attachment style, attachment avoidance, depended on gender. Men with higher levels of attachment avoidance reported higher levels of dominance. Higher levels of the defensive use of narcissism also predicted higher dominance scores. The final model accounted for 36% of the variance in dominance and is presented pictorially with coefficients in Figure 4.

With or without controlling for stress level, attachment anxiety and splitting variables were not significantly predictive of dominance in this multivariate analysis. In the final model presented in Table 6, attachment anxiety had a small relationship to

dominance, and the gender-anxiety interaction and self-splitting had small negative relationships to dominance; however, these relationships were not significant. Posthoc analyses separating gender groups further examined the impact of attachment anxiety and splitting on dominance, and these analyses are described below.

Test of Model Predicting Emotional Abuse Scores

Hierarchical regression results for emotional abuse are shown in Table 7. In step 1, stress moderately and significantly predicted emotional abuse. Higher levels of stress predicted more frequent and severe reports of emotionally abusive behavior. Stress alone accounted for 18% of the variation in emotional abuse (R^2 =.175, $p < .001$). Gender, also shown in step 1 (Table 7), was not a significant predictor of emotional abuse. Gender explained less than 1% additional emotional abuse variance ($\Delta R^2 = .008$, $p < .001$).

In step 2, insecure attachment orientations were not significant predictors and explained no unique variance in emotional abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .001$, $p < .001$). Gender-attachment interactions were not significant predictors, though adding them to the model explained an additional 2% of the variance in emotional abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .015$, $p < .001$). Splitting variables were not significant predictors of emotional abuse but narcissism had a small, positive effect. The more narcissistic people were, the more emotionally abusive they were. Defense mechanisms contributed a unique 7% to the explanation of emotional abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .065$, $p < .001$).

In step 3, defenses were assessed as moderators of the relationship between attachment avoidance and emotional abuse. Narcissism significantly moderated the relationship between attachment avoidance and emotional abuse, though the effect was small. With higher levels of avoidance, those who also reported higher than average

levels of narcissism were more emotionally abusive, but this relationship did not hold true for those with average or below levels of narcissism (see Figure 5). When this interaction was examined by gender, interesting differences were found. For women reporting higher than average levels of narcissism, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse (see Figure 6). For women reporting average or lower levels of narcissism, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted less frequent emotional abuse. For men, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse, but those with higher than average levels of narcissism had higher emotional abuse scores regardless of level of attachment avoidance (see Figure 7). Adding defensive moderators of attachment avoidance to the model contributed 4% to explaining variance in emotional abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .036, p < .001$).

Stress ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and narcissism ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) had moderate effects and the avoidance-narcissism interaction ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) had a small effect in significantly predicting emotional abuse. The final model explained 30% of variation in emotional abuse and is presented with coefficients in Figure 8. Because of concerns about whether the emotional abuse variable met assumptions for regression (see Data Analysis), the variable was submitted to a logarithmic transformation. When the hierarchical regression analyses were run with the transformed emotional abuse variable, the same primary predictors were significant but stress did not remain significant in the final model (see Table 8). Narcissism and the interaction between narcissism and attachment avoidance were the most robust predictors of emotional abuse. Higher levels of narcissism predicted increased frequency in emotional abuse tactics. Higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more emotional abuse only when levels of narcissism were high.

Posthoc Analyses for Dominance

Posthoc analyses were done in an effort to understand why attachment anxiety was not related to psychological abuse in planned models. To better understand gender differences in the anxiety-dominance relationship, separate regression models were run for each gender (see Table 9). These analyses were exploratory, and because of limitations in sample size by gender, significance is not reported for individual variables but only for models overall. At step 1 for women, attachment anxiety predicted dominance. Approximately 9% of the variation in dominance was explained by stress and insecure attachment. However, the model overall was not significant at this step [$F(1, 66) = 1.10$, $p = .299$], indicating a likelihood that all effects could be zero. At step 2, other-splitting predicted dominance for women ($\beta = .28$, $p < .05$). Given the nonsignificance of the model at the first step, other-splitting may be the only variable in this model that predicts dominance in women. The final model is presented in Figure 9.

At step 1 for men, stress and attachment avoidance moderately predicted dominance (see Table 9). Increased levels of stress and higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted higher dominance scores. In addition, attachment anxiety was negatively related to dominance. Less than average attachment anxiety in men, or increased attachment security, was related to greater than average use of dominance strategies. With stress and insecure attachment in the model, 41% of the variation in dominance was explained (see Table 9).

At step 2, with all relevant variables in the model, narcissism was better at explaining dominance than attachment security. Stress had a large effect ($\beta = .70$) on dominance scores among men. Attachment avoidance ($\beta = .49$) and narcissism ($\beta = .33$)

had moderate effects on dominance scores. The more stressed, the more avoidant in attachment orientation, and the more narcissistic men were, the more likely they may be to self-report perpetration of psychological abuse using dominance strategies. The final model explained 62% of the variation in dominance (see Figure 10).

Posthoc Analyses for Emotional Abuse

For emotional abuse, the overlap between stressors and attachment anxiety was considered. It is likely that stress or personal problems manifest as a result of attachment anxiety rather than vice versa. To test whether stress mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and emotional abuse, their order in a hierarchical regression analysis was reversed (see Table 10). The gender-attachment interaction terms were left out of the model because they were not previously significant predictors.

In the first step, attachment anxiety had a small, positive effect in significantly predicting emotional abuse. With gender and insecure attachment terms in the model, 8% of the variation in emotional abuse was explained ($R^2 = .079, p < .05$). In step 2, narcissism moderately and significantly predicted emotional abuse, which is similar to findings in the planned test. Adding defense mechanisms to the model contributed a unique 10% to the explanation of emotional abuse (see Table 10). Attachment anxiety was no longer significant at step 2. The relationship between attachment anxiety and emotional abuse was mediated by self-splitting; self-splitting was marginally significant ($p < .056$) at the second step and became significant at step three when related interaction terms were added.

At step 3, narcissism remained a significant predictor. Self-splitting became a significant predictor of emotional abuse with a small, positive effect. The avoidance-

narcissism interaction was significant as in the planned analysis. In addition, the avoidance-other-splitting interaction became significant. Other-splitting moderated the effect of attachment avoidance; higher levels of avoidance predicted more emotional abuse only among those who also reported greater than average use of other-splitting. Attachment avoidance, when moderated by high levels of narcissism or other-splitting, had a small, positive effect in predicting emotional abuse. Moderator relationships explained an additional 6% of the variation in emotional abuse ($\Delta R^2 = .057, p < .001$).

In the final step, the main effect of narcissism and the interaction between narcissism and avoidance remained significant. Stress was a significant predictor of emotional abuse as in the planned analysis. Splitting variables were no longer significant. It is arguable that stressors or problems result from the use of splitting as a defense rather than vice versa; therefore, the significant effects of self- and other-splitting on emotional abuse were mediated by stress. This model is presented in Figure 11. When a stress-anxiety interaction term was added to test for moderator effects, it was not significant ($\beta = -.11, p = .359$), so it was removed from the model. High levels of stress were not found to increase the anxiety-abuse relationship.

The findings were similar when the logarithmic transformation of the emotional abuse variable was used to check assumptions (see Data Analysis); however, the step that included attachment anxiety as a significant predictor was nonsignificant overall [$F(1, 127) = 2.04, p = .11$]. There is a high probability that the effect of attachment anxiety on emotional abuse could have been obtained even if it equaled zero. This reduces confidence in the mediational model of attachment anxiety presented here, given the assumptions of regression analyses. When a split-gender regression was performed on

emotional abuse, attachment anxiety was not a significant predictor for either group. Little evidence that high levels of attachment anxiety predicted more frequent psychological abuse was discovered in posthoc analyses.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

This study examined the psychological abuse aspect of domestic violence in an attempt to discover causes and risk factors that are assessable by clinicians. College students were studied to inform early intervention practices and to improve understandings of how this developmental period contributes to the formation of intimate relationship problems. Gender differences and attachment insecurity were examined as influences on abuse. Defense mechanisms were included to describe potentially destructive responses to stressors and to elucidate how attachment avoidance contributes to abuse. Gender was hypothesized to predict dominance and to moderate the relationship between attachment insecurity and psychological abusiveness. Attachment insecurity was expected to predict psychological abuse. Narcissism and splitting were expected to predict psychological abuse, to moderate the avoidance-abuse relationship, and to mediate the anxiety-abuse relationship. Discussions of each predictor, whether related hypotheses were supported, and how the findings fit with previous literature follow. Gender influences are portrayed first, followed by attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, narcissism, splitting, and stress. Interaction effects and posthoc findings are elaborated after primary predictor effects have been articulated.

The hypothesis that men would be dominant more frequently than women was marginally supported, especially in terms of misuse of authority. The main effect of gender on dominance was not as explanatory as the interaction between gender and avoidance, however, which is described below. Gender was not expected to predict emotional abuse, nor did it. It is interesting that the ranges of response were so different,

however, with only men reporting very high levels of emotional abusiveness. Murphy and Cascardi (1999) found that men and women reported roughly equivalent psychological abuse unless their romantic relationships were violent, in which case men were more psychologically abusive. The high levels of emotional abuse reported by some men in this sample may be an indicator of a violent subpopulation, though violent behavior was not measured directly in this study.

The hypothesis that attachment avoidance would be related to psychological abuse was supported in that avoidance was correlated with dominance in men. The goal of this project, to demonstrate that attachment avoidance is involved in psychological abuse when moderated by gender and defensiveness, was achieved. Narcissism moderated the relationship between avoidance and emotional abuse, which is described below. Gender moderated the avoidance-dominance relationship in partial support of the hypothesis that gender would moderate insecurity-abuse relationships. Men were more dominant the more avoidant they were, but there was no relationship between avoidance and dominance for women. Men with high levels of avoidance were prone to disparage their partners and to use their authority to manage relationships. Avoidant attachment was the strongest predictor of dominance for men. The hypothesis that insecure men would be more dominant than secure men was partially supported in terms of attachment avoidance. The hypothesis that insecure women would be less dominant than secure women was not supported. Overall, the use of dominance strategies is best predicted by considering both gender and adult attachment. Avoidant college-age men are most at risk of dominating female romantic partners.

This finding replicates a previous study that related attachment avoidance and abuse in men (Dutton et al., 1994). The relationship between avoidance and abuse can be explained by attachment theory as: (a) high levels of defensiveness based on the expectation that others will not be responsive to expressed needs (Simpson & Rholes, 1994); and (b) a lack of sensitivity to others characterized by fewer positive and more negative caregiving behaviors, especially coldness (Kunce & Shaver, 1994). Avoidance is related to difficulties with intimacy (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998). There is also evidence that the motivation behind abuse for those high in avoidance is instrumentality or getting what one wants from another and not affect regulation (Babcock et al., 2000). The instrumental use of abuse is described by feminists as maintenance of power and privilege accorded to men in a patriarchal society (see Miller, 1976/1986, 1991), which may explain why this relationship was found for men but not women.

Theorists combining feminist and attachment constructs (Sheinberg & Penn, 1991) have suggested that insecure men and women have relational difficulties in areas associated with the opposite gender; therefore, men have difficulty expressing dependent feelings and women have difficulty expressing independence in intimate relationships. There is also empirical evidence that psychologically abusive and violent men are perceived as more traditional in terms of gender roles by female partners (Ellington & Marshall, 1997). Male gender role socialization promotes independence, attachment avoidance promotes independence (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000), and attachment insecurity increases vulnerability to gender role socialization, so avoidant men in particular may fear closeness (Stosny, 1995).

Young avoidant men may be unable to express dependency needs in romantic relationships or use these relationships to foster joint coping with stress, instead finding effective ways to push others away (Simpson & Rholes, 1994). Their efforts serve to maintain their gender identities as masculine, independent, and in charge but put them at risk of perpetrating relationship violence. The combination of dominance and insecure attachment in men has been found to predict physical abusiveness (Mauricio & Gormley, 2001). Male gender role socialization and avoidant attachment serve to limit coping strategies that preserve and rely on intimate relationships. Avoidant men may sacrifice or damage romantic relationships in their efforts to preserve themselves. University counseling centers may find that some of these men seek counseling to understand what went wrong in their relationships, despite the fact that they seem confident about their choices, behaviors, and attitudes. However, outreach efforts are recommended because men and those high in attachment avoidance seldom seek help (see Fuendeling, 1998).

Attachment anxiety was correlated with dominance, especially restrictiveness in men and disparagement in women. Attachment anxiety was also correlated with emotional abuse in men, especially restrictive engulfment, denigration, and hostile withdrawal. That attachment anxiety would be more related to intrusive or restrictive aspects of psychological abuse than attachment avoidance was anticipated, but it was not expected that this would be true only for men. The hypothesis that attachment anxiety would predict emotional abuse was not supported, however. Posthoc analyses examined variations from planned models, but the anxiety-abuse relationship was not replicated in this study. The hypothesis that insecure women would be more emotionally abusive than secure women, more so than for men, was not supported. Surprisingly, attachment

anxiety predicted less dominance by men, though gender did not moderate the relationship between attachment anxiety and psychological abuse as expected. Additionally, attachment anxiety was not correlated to narcissism; therefore, narcissism could not mediate the anxiety-abuse relationship as theorized. Rather, stress was a better predictor of psychological abuse than attachment anxiety. Though stress and attachment anxiety were moderately correlated, stress levels predicted psychological abuse while anxiety did not.

This finding was surprising given previous research suggesting that attachment anxiety predicts abuse (Dutton et al., 1994; Roberts & Noller, 1998), though this research emphasized physical rather than psychological abuse. Perhaps attachment anxiety is related to physical acting out more than subtle forms of mental and emotional abuse. It is possible that anxiously attached people act out sooner under stress than avoidantly attached people. Those high in avoidance defend against feeling the anxiety as long as possible (see Simpson & Rholes, 1994) and, therefore, may be more at risk of perpetrating psychological forms of abuse.

The differential effects of attachment anxiety and avoidance on physical versus psychological abuse need further clarification; however, the subscales of the dependent measures in this study have been differentially linked to physical abuse (Hamby, 1996; Murphy et al., 1999). The strongest predictors of physical aggression are: (a) the restrictiveness subscale of the dominance measure, which in this study was related only to attachment anxiety in men; (b) the dominance/intimidation subscale of the emotional abuse measure, which was related to attachment anxiety in men, and (c) the denigration subscale of the emotional abuse measure, which was not significantly related to

attachment insecurity in either gender. The other subscales with moderate predictive value regarding physical abuse are the restrictive engulfment scale, which was related to attachment anxiety in men, and the hostile withdrawal scale, which was related to attachment anxiety in men. Given these correlations, attachment anxiety in men is implicated in types of psychological abuse that lead to physical abuse. Perhaps the conflict generated by a dependent attachment style and male gender role socialization that calls for independence contributes to physical abuse; however, in the models tested, attachment anxiety was not a substantial contributor to psychological abuse, even among men.

In another study (Hoover et al., 1999), attachment anxiety interacted with gender to predict emotional abuse and the subscale of hostile withdrawal. In the current sample, three subscales of the emotional abuse measure, including hostile withdrawal, were correlated with attachment anxiety in men. However, attachment anxiety was not a significant predictor in regression models. None of the aforementioned studies that related attachment anxiety to abuse controlled for stress levels, which may have confounded their results. Alternatively, the overlap between measures of stress and attachment anxiety in the present study is a consideration; future studies that utilize similar measures with less overlap would help clarify these relationships.

The hypothesis that defensive processes would be related to psychological abuse was partially supported. Narcissism and other-splitting were correlated with both dominance and emotional abuse, and self-splitting was correlated with emotional abuse. Among men, all three defenses were correlated with emotional abuse, and narcissism was correlated with dominance. Among women, the only correlation was between other-

splitting and dominance. Narcissism predicted both types of psychological abuse and also moderated the avoidance-emotional abuse relationship. As higher levels of narcissism were reported, higher levels of psychological abuse were reported. At higher levels of narcissism, higher avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse, while at lower levels of narcissism there was no such relationship. Those participants with avoidant attachment orientations who were also defensively entitled and exploitative were emotionally abusive to romantic partners. This supported the hypothesis that those high in avoidance who also reported high levels of defensiveness would admit more psychological abuse.

There were some interesting gender differences in this relationship, however. As expected, men were more likely to use an externalizing defense; they were more narcissistic than women. Men reported higher levels of exploitative-entitled attitudes. For men, narcissistic defenses predicted dominance. Higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse in men, but higher levels of narcissism increased the frequency of emotional abuse across all levels of attachment avoidance. In women, the relationship between attachment avoidance and emotional abuse depended on level of narcissism. Highly avoidant women with high levels of narcissism reported more frequent emotional abuse like men, but when narcissism levels were low, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted less frequent emotional abuse. In women, entitled and exploitative attitudes were correlated with hostile withdrawal. When women used externalizing defenses, they were psychologically abusive. Women with high levels of other-splitting, regardless of attachment style or level of narcissism, reported higher levels of dominance.

The narcissistic defense is a risk factor for psychological abusiveness. Narcissism was previously related to wife abuse (Dutton et al., 1996), and men have been found to be more narcissistic than women (see Carroll et al., 1996b). A feminist explanation is that this difference is the result of gender role socialization. There is some support for this idea in the research literature. The entitlement aspect of narcissism was considered more negative when displayed by women than men, indicating that gender role socialization and stereotyping encourages narcissism in men and discourages it in women (Carroll et al.). To maintain a masculine gender identity, men may develop narcissistic characteristics despite negative consequences to their romantic relationships, and these characteristics may be considered socially acceptable in men.

That socialization differences in narcissistic development contribute to psychological abuse helps explain why men as a group are more abusive than women as a group, and also why some individual women are abusive. It is interesting that avoidant and narcissistic men are psychologically abusive, but in women both attachment avoidance and narcissism must be present to predict psychological abuse. When women violate gender role stereotypes (i.e., using externalizing defenses such as narcissism and other-splitting) and act more like men are socialized to behave, women may be at similar risk to men of becoming psychologically abusive. Whether negative feedback that women receive for narcissistic traits or the use of externalizing defenses negatively impacts their sense of self (in comparison to men who are reinforced for similar behavior) is worthy of further study.

Avoidance and narcissism were separate risk factors for dominance in men, but both avoidance and narcissism were necessary to predict emotional abuse in the entire

sample and in women. Men get what they want from women through the use of dominating behavior (Babcock et al., 2000); men benefit from gender role accordance in a patriarchal society (Enns, 1993) by being dominant, narcissistic, and overly self-reliant; and narcissism is considered acceptable in men but not women (e.g., Carroll et al., 1996b). Gender role socialization seems to contribute to entitled, overly self-reliant expectations that contribute to male perpetration of psychological abuse. The meaning of the interaction between avoidance and narcissism may be different for women. Avoidance in women was negatively correlated with narcissism, and higher levels of avoidance were related to lower levels of grandiosity. Avoidant women may be less likely to be narcissistic. However, avoidant women may be less invested in what others think of them and more likely to violate gender role stereotypes. Women who step out of the female gender role by using narcissistic or other externalizing defenses, such as other-splitting, may be at risk of psychologically abusive behavior like their male counterparts.

Narcissism was previously related to insecure attachment categories, though not the dismissing category (Kelley & Gelso, 2000). Why narcissism predicted psychological abuse in the present study but was related only to avoidant attachment as a moderator requires explanation. This discrepancy may have resulted because past measures of attachment calculated attachment categorically while this study utilized continuous underlying dimensions. Also, this finding is somewhat similar to previous research (Rapoza & Malley-Morrison, 1997) that found self-esteem only related to secure attachment, though in men it was also related to dismissing attachment. Though self-esteem and narcissism are not the same construct, they are conceptually related as healthy and unhealthy positive senses of self. Brennan and Bosson (1998) found that the

dismissing (avoidant) attachment category differed from the secure attachment category in two fewer sources of self-esteem: personal growth and positive relations with others. George and West (1999) cautioned that the theoretically positive sense of self in dismissing people may actually be a defensive self-presentation that hides a negative sense of self. Further examination of the relationship between defensive and actual positive self-representations in attachment avoidance is warranted. The positive sense of self in securely attached people, or genuine self-esteem, may differ from the positive sense of self in highly avoidant people that may reflect defensive narcissism. A defensively positive sense of self may have negative interpersonal consequences that differentiates avoidant from secure attachment. Current findings relating narcissism and psychological abuse may help explain previous findings that narcissism predicted interpersonal rejection (Carroll et al., 1996a, 1996b). Psychologically abusive behavior resulting from narcissism has negative interpersonal consequences.

Trends reported above were significant even after controlling for differences in stress level. Severity of problems or level of stress was correlated to both types of psychological abuse. In previous research (see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999), this was true for women but not men. In the current study, the relationship between stress and psychological abuse held true only for men. Stress associated with high levels of self-reported personal problems predicted a large portion of male dominance, which is important information for college counseling centers. Male college students presenting with commonly seen problems such as substance abuse should be screened for risk of perpetrating abuse, including assessment of attachment style and gender role adherence (see Enns, 1993), as one means of identifying ineffective coping strategies. In addition,

all students presenting with common problems should be assessed for attachment style, the use of externalizing defenses, and perpetration of psychological abuse in romantic relationships. These risk factors not only interfere with coping, identity, and relationship skill development, but also they may undermine college students' support networks.

When stress was tested as a mediator, splitting predicted emotional abuse as hypothesized. The hypotheses that self-splitting would be more strongly related to attachment anxiety and that other-splitting would be more strongly related to attachment avoidance in predicting psychological abuse received partial support. Self-splitting mediated the anxiety-emotional abuse relationship, and other-splitting partially moderated the avoidance-emotional abuse relationship only without controlling for stress level. Avoidant people who also use other-splitting as a defense may be more emotionally abusive than avoidant people who do not use this defense. Stress effectively mediated the effect of splitting on emotional abuse. Other-splitting helped explain women's use of dominance strategies.

Correlations among splitting variables, stress, attachment avoidance, and attachment anxiety corroborated earlier findings (Lopez, 2001; Lopez et al., 1997) with two exceptions. In these studies and the present study, significant, positive relationships were found between attachment insecurity and splitting, more moderate ones with attachment anxiety and smaller ones with attachment avoidance. Gender differences in other-splitting were found by Lopez (2001), with men reporting higher scores than women. In the current study, no gender differences were found; however, attachment avoidance and other-splitting were not significantly correlated for men, the only nonsignificant relationship between insecurity and splitting for either gender in both of

these studies. In the other study (Lopez et al., 1997), high stress and insecure attachment interacted to predict splitting, illuminating the relationship between the dismissing attachment category and splitting. In the present study, high stress did not moderate the anxiety-abuse relationship. Stress was a better predictor of emotional abuse than attachment avoidance or other-splitting, but without stress in the model, there was an interaction between avoidance and other-splitting. Additional exploration of interrelationships in attachment avoidance, high stress, and other-splitting as they correspond to domestic violence is recommended.

Summary

Attachment avoidance is an important contributor to psychological abuse in dating relationships and explains psychological abuse better than attachment anxiety. Attachment avoidance implies a more negative response to conflict than attachment anxiety (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Fishtein et al., 1999). Conflicts during the college years may aggravate developmental issues related to both identity and intimacy; those high in avoidance may be overly inclined to resolve conflicts by preserving their identity, losing ground in the area of intimacy skills. The need to gain distance from a partner in order to cope, a deactivation of the attachment system, is problematic for romantic relationships. Distancing tactics suggest that the perpetrator of such tactics is enacting withdrawal to avoid intimacy, while the defensive need to hide this by criticizing others demonstrates how this can be cognitively distorted as the other person's withdrawal. Failure to signal distress exacerbates negative effects of deactivation on the relationship. Indirect expression of needs may occur through acting out in abusive ways. It is interesting that insecurity more effectively predicted abuse by men than women. This

replicates findings that highly insecure women are least likely to perpetrate abuse (O'Hearn & Davis, 1997). Perhaps in order to abuse others one must feel somewhat powerful, and men are more likely to feel powerful over women than vice versa given gender role socialization of men as aggressors and women as submitters.

The utility of including cognitive and affective variables in models that attempt to explain behavior from attachment styles (Collins, 1996) is demonstrated by this study. It was necessary to consider gender and defenses as moderators to capture the relationship between attachment avoidance and psychological abuse. Only attachment avoidance and male gender together predicted the use of dominance, supporting the need for integration of feminist and attachment theories in the study of domestic violence. Gender differences found were subtle and potentially interpretable as due to gender role socialization or gender "schema." Externalizing defenses, often associated with male gender role socialization, helped predict psychological abuse. In particular, narcissism predicted psychological abuse, occurred primarily in men, and exacerbated the effects of attachment avoidance on emotional abuse. The interaction of narcissism and avoidance is interesting; narcissistic misperception of being insufficiently acknowledged by another is theorized to cause aggression (Fischer, 1989), while misperceptions regarding another's lack of availability are related to attachment avoidance. These two types of distortions combined lead to erroneous judgments about and misbehavior in relationships; narcissistic defenses help illustrate the implications of extreme levels of underlying anxiety in attachment avoidance (Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995). Studies examining attachment avoidance as a predictor of behavioral outcomes should include defensive measures in moderator models.

Narcissism, male gender, and attachment avoidance are characteristics related to perpetration of psychological abuse in college students. Narcissism is a defensive effort at self-preservation that may be activated by an attachment threat such as a desire for connection or a partner's request for closeness; however, narcissistic responses to avoidant expectations are psychologically abusive and damage relationships with important others. Putting self-preservation before relationship preservation is stereotypically part of the male gender role that values independence over interdependence or dependence. A sense of entitlement, a belief that one has the right to exploit others, and a grandiose sense of self are associated with male privilege. Ultimately, however, damaging important relationships erodes the sense of self that these efforts strive to maintain.

Though it is surprising that attachment anxiety was not a significant risk factor for psychological abuse, this may be due to an inherent desire to preserve relationships and a higher tolerance for conflict (Fishtein et al., 1999). In fact, men with high levels of attachment anxiety were less inclined to be dominant than securely attached men. Those with high levels of attachment anxiety may be more motivated to develop relationship skills during early adult years, sacrificing their sense of self if needed. Though sacrificing autonomy will ultimately impact intimacy, these effects may be more perceptible in older adults. Follow up studies with middle-age heterosexual couples are recommended to clarify the effects of attachment anxiety on psychological abuse across the lifespan.

This study provided empirical evidence of ideas that feminist practitioners have suggested about domestic violence for many years. Anger management classes are seldom recommended for male batterers by feminist counseling organizations because

affect dysregulation is not assessed as the problem; rather, distorted beliefs about gender and relationships are challenged in psychoeducational group settings. The power and control wheel is used to inform men that acting like the master of the house is a misuse of male privilege (DAIP, date unknown). Perpetrators are taught alternative means of getting what they want, such as negotiation and direct communication skills. Feminists purport that blaming the victim for the abuse is defensive. Abusers often do whatever is necessary to protect themselves from negative appraisal, even at the expense of important others, in an effort to ensure that they will be able to get what they want in the future. This is a narcissistic defense. Men feel entitled to women's services; if they do not get their own way, they resort to coercion or force (Walker, 1999). If the police are called, abusers may convincingly manipulate the situation to their own advantage. In a sense, such tactics are embedded in male culture as "normal" means of taking care of relational business. This was supported by the finding that attachment security more than attachment anxiety predicted emotional abuse by men. As feminists have suggested, men may abuse women because they feel comfortable doing so. Boys are socialized to manage relationships aggressively with groups of male peers and may be ill prepared for conflicting moral perspectives that arise when relating to females who are socialized differently (see Gilligan, 1982/1993).

There were limitations to this study. The sample was limited to undergraduate students at a large, Midwestern university. It was not a random sample, and this limits the generalizability of these results to other samples of college students. Replication with a random sample is recommended. This was a normal (non-clinical) sample, and it is

recommended that similar studies be done with clinical populations, especially those with relationship problems and histories of domestic violence.

The study focused on self-reports of psychological abusiveness and did not examine victimization. This study did not solicit input from victims or observers about perpetrators; therefore, psychological abuse was likely underreported (Smith, 1994). Severity of the psychological abuse, usually assessed by its impact on the victim, was not measured in this study. This study did not examine the situations in which events occur, largely because this information is best gathered through interview methods. Physical abuse was not analyzed. The findings are limited to how people self-report perpetration of psychological abuse. Because past studies found gender differences in self-reports of psychological abuse (see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999), gender was controlled to reduce potential bias.

The comparison across genders measured self-reported frequencies of behaviors and did not address contextual differences related to these behaviors (see Murphy & Cascardi, 1999). Whether women were using psychological tactics to defend themselves against abusive partners remains unknown. Future studies should use interviews to discover gender differences in construction of meaning and motivations behind psychological abuse (see DeKeseredy, 1999). In addition, only biological differences in gender were measured. Gender role adherence or perceptions of heterosexual relationships as traditional versus egalitarian (e. g., Ellington & Marshall, 1997) were not included in this analysis.

The ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000) is a new version of the attachment measure, and as such, it has not been utilized in much research. The Adult Attachment Interview

(George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996) is often preferred to self-report measures of attachment to bypass defenses (for discussion, see George & West, 1999); however, self-report methods are able to capture attachment-related perceptions relevant to romantic relationships (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999; Simpson & Rholes, 1998). This study was concerned with how people view themselves, and measures of defenses were included in the model. In addition, how people present themselves contributes to the literature on assessment, prevention, and treatment. However, future studies of psychological abuse in romantic relationships using the Adult Attachment Interview to establish connections between insecurity and psychological abuse are recommended.

The MMEA (Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Murphy et al., 1999) is also a new measure. Participants did not normally distribute in their responses, and it is unclear whether this is attributable to the scale or the sample. Continued investigation into the merits of using this scale to capture an important psychological abuse construct is recommended.

Affective measures were not included in this model. Responses to powerful affect were captured in defense variables, stress level was measured, and relevant affect such as hostility overlaps with the dependent measures. Stress was included as a control variable and secondarily examined as a potential mediator of observed effects. Why one person becomes psychologically abusive and another does not, regardless of their level of stress, was the focus of this study.

Only two defensive processes were studied. Splitting was not as relevant to models testing avoidance as they have been when attachment anxiety was examined in relationship to abuse. Psychological abuse research including other externalizing defenses

such as projection and projective identification is recommended, especially in the study of male psychological abuse. Different processes may be more relevant to females.

CONCLUSIONS

Theory integration in research aids in the development of a more complete understanding of complex psychological processes such as psychological abuse. Although attachment theory is deemed an integrative theory (Lopez, 1995), especially when explaining psychological problems found in couples (Lindegger & Barry, 1999), this study demonstrates the utility of integrating attachment theory with feminist theory to consider sociological constructs such as gender role socialization (also see Mauricio & Gormley, 2001) and with psychodynamic constructs like defense mechanisms. Such research can contribute to efforts to improve psychotherapy effectiveness through theory integration (see Goldfried, Castonguay, & Safran, 1992). Efforts to understand individuals simultaneously at sociological, relational, and intrapsychic/cognitive levels are immediately applicable to clinical work. Theoretically integrative approaches may widen clinical perspectives to encompass cultural differences in combination with individual complexity, but more research in this area is needed.

Walker (1999) cautioned against requiring domestic violence researchers to be constricted to one ideology. She also emphasized that stopping physical violence is not sufficient when batterers simply learn to become better psychological batterers. She identified an attitude of entitlement in males that has been immutable despite feminism's best educational efforts over several decades. This study utilized the concept of narcissism to examine attitudes of entitlement, which were found more often in men than women and predicted psychological abuse. The construction of a measure that captures

entitled attitudes specific to men's approach to relationships with women would help further study of this difficult problem.

Empirical demonstrations of feminist concepts are needed to influence mainstream clinical practice. To stop psychological abuse and intervene so that perpetrators become motivated to change, linking problematic attitudes with known clinical problems may provide solutions. For instance, both narcissism and attachment avoidance are difficult problems to address, as is the entitled attitude associated with male privilege, but effective interventions may be similar and informed by related theories when integrated with feminist theory. Studies that test the utility of such interventions in helping psychologically abusive men change are needed. For example, clinical effectiveness studies that compare anger management interventions, feminist psychoeducational approaches, psychodynamic interventions found effective with narcissism, and interventions that enhance negative senses of self and others in order to improve "felt security" (Sroufe & Waters, 1977) would be helpful.

This study begins to demonstrate the influence of gender role socialization and insecure attachment style on perpetration of psychological abuse in college students. Emotional abuse was prevalent in the current sample, and dominance was prevalent in men. Most students reported some emotional abuse of others, and most men reported some dominance. Although a comprehensive sense of the causes of mental and emotional abuse in romantic dating relationships remains elusive, characteristics of perpetrators were discovered that will aid efforts at prevention, assessment, and intervention. Prevention measures that assess insecurity in adult attachments, perspectives on gender in regard to relationships, pathological narcissistic defensiveness, and use of

psychologically abusive strategies are recommended. In addition, group intervention protocols used with male batterers can be expanded to address avoidance of intimacy in adult attachments and narcissistic entitlement and exploitativeness, with negative consequences to such approaches clarified and alternatives recommended. In addition, individual interventions may be more fruitful than groups for those with such problems. Whether the results of this study are useful in prevention or intervention efforts should be empirically tested. In addition, only two types of abuse were examined, and measures of other types of psychological abuse strategies are needed.

Not only does psychological abuse cause harm in its own right, but it can lead to physical violence. The damage done to victims is most likely attributable to perpetrator misperceptions. Why the research literature under-interprets these misperceptions and blames victims is perhaps best explained by sociological influences. If these distortions are part of male gender role socialization, and therefore considered superior ideas in a patriarchal society and heavily reinforced, most people may fail to consider these ideas distortions or misperceptions. For example, getting what you want, even at another person's expense, may be an acceptable or even valued approach in our society (also see Lasch, 1979). Rather than intervening with women to improve their adaptation to cultural narcissism, relational theories emphasized in this study suggest alternative changes that men can make to help preserve and build healthy family relationships. Focus groups of a normal population of men could be interviewed to uncover non-relational views that are part of male culture, to discover motivations in men to preserve romantic relationships, and to find out how men feel about their gender role socialization as it impacts close relationships.

Risk assessments by clinicians, especially in inpatient psychiatric settings, should consider domestic violence. Suicide risk assessments are typically more comprehensive than assault risk assessments, but few suicide assessments question female patients about whether they are victims of domestic violence or psychological abuse despite statistical indications of such health risks. This study contributes to assault risk assessment by providing information about factors and combinations of factors that increase the risk of perpetrating psychological and physical abuse. Whether improved risk assessment decreases assaults should be examined.

To test differential effects of various insecure attachment orientations and gender constructs on aspects of domestic violence, separate models for each attachment style, each gender, and each abuse strategy may be required. Patterns in how attachment avoidance and anxiety lead to abuse are quite different, and models that continue to elucidate this difference are essential. Too much emphasis has been placed on separation fears as the catalyst to abuse, and not enough attention has been given to fear of intimacy. Attachment avoidance and defensiveness are important variables to include in predictive models, as is stress level when examining attachment anxiety. Whether avoidance contributes to physical abuse in romantic relationships with moderators in predictive models remains unknown. New measures of defensiveness are needed, especially to discriminate externalizing defenses and acting out from other types of primitive defenses.

To detect gender differences in psychological abuse, separate models may need to be tested for men and women, and the inclusion of variables that capture potentially important motivational differences is recommended. In addition to measuring biological gender, adherence to gender role is relevant and should be included in future studies of

domestic violence. Acknowledging that the male gender is a risk factor for assault is useful to clinicians, but assisting men with altering attitudes that lead to abuse requires that we understand the effects of gender role socialization. Examining numerous psychological abuse strategies is essential and clearly calls for separate predictive models; thus, larger samples may be necessary to clarify separate models for men and women. Further development of psychometrically sound psychological abuse scales that measure overt and subtle power and control strategies used by both men and women is needed. In addition, multiple measures of physical abuse that are sensitive to gender differences should be developed and included in future studies so that interrelationships between physical and psychological abuse strategies for each gender can be delineated. Frequency and severity of different types of abuse and their impact on victims should be assessed separately. Self-reports and observer/partner reports are helpful to improve the accuracy of measures of abuse.

Advanced multivariate techniques may be needed to compare and contrast the many variables involved in predicting abusiveness. When multiple sound scales of each construct are available (including gender schemata, insecure intimate attachment styles, defensive management of affect and cognition, and psychological and physical abuse) structural equation modeling can be used to minimize measurement error and map out interrelationships more carefully. To simultaneously examine self- and partner-reports of abuse in couples, statistical procedures that do not assume independence, such as hierarachical linear modeling (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992), will be of use.

Follow up research should examine narcissism as a defensive moderator of the relationship between attachment avoidance and other behavioral outcomes, especially

physical abuse in romantic relationships. Similar models testing gender, attachment, and defense mechanisms might be useful in examining child abuse and neglect by parents, particularly verbal abuse. Extending these findings to see if similar variables predict date rape and marital rape would be beneficial. Replicating this study with a random or cross-regional sample of college students as well as older populations and clinical populations would increase the generalizability of findings related to psychological abuse.

Interventions that increase the "felt security" (Sroufe & Waters, 1977) of battered women should be examined empirically to determine if attachment theory can inform efforts to help these women repair damage done to senses of self by destructive adult relationships. Studies that attempt to assist battered women in their efforts to create safe lives should consider neuropsychological damage from traumatic brain injuries suffered at the hands of intimate partners as potential barriers. Standard neuropsychological screening is recommended for any victim of domestic violence who has suffered numerous blows to the head, with or without losses of consciousness. Further study of the neuropsychological consequences of domestic battery is suggested.

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Table 1

Gender Differences in Primary Variables

	Females (n = 66)			Males (n = 61)		
	M	*SD*	Range	*M*	*SD*	Range
Stress	44.32	13.48	23 - 86	46.34	16.30	21 - 101
Anxiety	3.19	1.08	1.56 - 5.61	3.10	1.04	1.00 - 5.44
Avoidance	2.77	1.01	1.06 - 5.61	3.11	.97	1.50 - 6.44
Narcissism	12.71	5.24	1 - 23	16.56	5.80	4 - 32
Self-Splitting	22.74	5.77	12 - 34	21.36	5.70	12 - 35
Other-Splitting	16.61	6.26	8 - 31	17.25	5.62	8 - 29
Dominance	62.35	8.01	46 - 83	66.54	12.93	37 - 103
Emotional Abuse	21.22	15.70	1 - 73	26.96	30.52	0 - 155

Note. Differences all nonsignificant.

Table 2

Gender Differences in Psychological Abuse and Narcissism Subscales

		Females (n = 66)		Males (n = 61)	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Dominance:	Authority	23.15_a	3.71	26.00_b	6.62
	Restrictiveness	22.70_a	3.19	22.71_a	4.32
	Disparagement	16.50_a	3.64	17.84_a	5.17
Emotional Abuse:					
	Restrictive Engulfment	8.48_a	7.36	8.73_a	8.81
	Denigration	1.98_a	2.70	4.98_a	8.31
	Hostile Withdrawal	9.59_a	7.47	10.03_a	9.64
	Dominance/Intimidation	1.17_a	2.54	3.22_a	6.96
Narcissism:	Grandiosity	12.39_a	5.31	15.67_a	5.49
	Exploitation/Entitlement	1.65_a	1.47	3.21_b	2.07

[a] Same subscripts not significantly different; [b]different subscripts significantly different, $p < .01$.

Table 3

Correlations of Demographic, Predictor, and Outcome Variables (N = 127)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Stress	--	.55**	.30**	-.08	.58**	.46**	.37**	.42**
2. Anxiety		--	.40**	-.13	.58**	.37**	.23**	.25**
3. Avoidance			--	-.02	.38**	.26**	.33**	.15
4. Narcissism				--	-.23**	-.10	.31**	.24**
5. Self-splitting					--	.40**	.15	.25**
6. Other-splitting						--	.21*	.19*
7. Dominance							--	.56**
8. Emotional Abuse								--

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 4

Correlations of Demographic, Predictor, and Outcome Variables by Gender

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Stress	--	.50**	.22	-.18	.56**	.38**	.13	-.01
2. Anxiety	.62**	--	.38**	-.19	.50**	.33**	.30*	.17
3. Avoidance	.35**	.45**	--	-.26*	.32**	.27*	.09	.01
4. Narcissism	-.06	-.05	.11	--	-.28*	-.16	.03	.10
5. Self-splitting	.63**	.67**	.51**	-.13	--	.40**	.10	.07
6. Other-splitting	.53**	.42**	.24	-.10	.42**	--	.27*	.07
7. Dominance	.50**	.21	.48**	.41**	.23	.17	--	.34**
8. Emotional Abuse	.62**	.33**	.21	.28*	.40**	.27*	.62**	--

Note. Correlations above the diagonal for women (n = 66); correlations below the diagonal for men (n = 61).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Adult Attachment Correlations with Psychological Abuse and Narcissism Subscales by Gender

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Anxiety	--	.38**	.16	.24	.29*	.20	.05	.13	.07	-.21	.16
2. Avoidance	.45**	--	.27*	-.20	.09	-.08	.00	.14	-.13	-.26*	.04
3. D-Authority	.04	.47**	--	.25*	.54**	.07	.42**	.24	.02	.07	.29*
4. D-Restrictiveness	.30*	-.01	.40**	--	.28*	.43**	.28*	.30*	.36**	-.04	.23
5. D-Disparagement	.23	.59**	.68**	.20	--	.08	.21	.08	.06	-.05	.30*
6. E-Restrictive Engulfment	.28*	.13	.37**	.60**	.24	--	.35**	.53**	.35**	.04	.10
7. E-Denigration	.25	.22	.57**	.54**	.43**	.71**	--	.56**	.21	.10	.13
8. E-Hostile Withdrawal	.38**	.23	.42**	.60**	.31*	.77**	.74**	--	.33**	.06	.28*
9. E-Dominance/Intimidation	.26*	.18	.51**	.54**	.38**	.75**	.86**	.73**	--	.20	.03
10. N-Grandiosity	-.08	.08	.44**	.20	.21	.20	.27*	.16	.32*	--	.37**
11. N-Exploitation/Entitlement	.22	.37**	.53**	.32*	.37**	.31*	.44**	.41**	.40**	.59**	--

Note. Correlations above the diagonal for women (n = 66); correlations below the diagonal for men (n = 61).
D = Dominance subscales, E = Emotional abuse subscales, N = Narcissism subscales.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Dominance (N = 127)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 1			
Stress	.26	.06	.36***
Gender	3.67	1.78	.17*
Step 2			
Stress	.22	.07	.31**
Gender	2.88	1.79	.13
Anxiety	-.27	1.05	-.03
Avoidance	2.43	.97	.23*
Step 3			
Stress	.22	.07	.30**
Gender	2.66	1.72	.12
Anxiety	1.01	1.24	.10
Avoidance	-.40	1.25	-.04
Gender*Anxiety	-3.06	1.77	-.20
Gender*Avoidance	6.43	1.88	.40**

Note. Table 6 continued on next page.

Table 6 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 4			
Stress	.25	.07	.35**
Gender	.15	1.76	.01
Anxiety	1.47	1.22	.14
Avoidance	.26	1.22	.02
Gender*Anxiety	-2.96	1.69	-.20
Gender*Avoidance	5.55	1.83	.35**
Narcissism	.52	.15	.28**
Self-Splitting	-.26	.20	-.14
Other-Splitting	.13	.16	.07

Note. $R^2 = .165$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .042$ for Step 2; $\Delta R^2 = .071$ for Step 3; $\Delta R^2 = .083$ for Step 4 (all *p*s < .001).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 7

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Emotional Abuse (N = 127)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 1			
Stress	.67	.13	.41***
Gender	4.39	3.90	.09
Step 2			
Stress	.59	.18	.37**
Gender	.59	4.21	.01
Anxiety	-.80	2.91	-.04
Avoidance	-.28	2.90	-.01
Gender*Anxiety	3.96	4.03	.12
Gender*Avoidance	.34	4.38	.01
Narcissism	1.17	.36	.28**
Self-Splitting	.28	.47	.07
Other-Splitting	.02	.37	.00

Note. Table 7 continued on next page.

Table 7 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 3			
Stress	.51	.18	.31**
Gender	-.29	4.26	-.01
Anxiety	-1.26	2.94	-.06
Avoidance	1.61	3.06	.07
Gender*Anxiety	4.92	4.10	.15
Gender*Avoidance	-3.52	4.91	-.10
Narcissism	1.26	.36	.31**
Self-Splitting	.41	.47	.10
Other-Splitting	-.07	.38	-.02
Avoidance*Narcissism	.74	.36	.19*
Avoidance*Self-Splitting	-.31	.36	-.08
Avoidance*Other-Splitting	.59	.38	.15

Note. $R^2 = .183$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .081$ for Step 2; $\Delta R^2 = .036$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Logarithmic Transformation of Emotional Abuse for Regression (N = 127)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 1			
Stress	.01	.00	.25**
Gender	.01	.08	.01
Step 2			
Stress	.00	.00	.13
Gender	-.02	.09	-.03
Anxiety	.02	.06	.06
Avoidance	-.01	.06	-.03
Gender*Anxiety	.03	.08	.05
Gender*Avoidance	.03	.09	.05
Narcissism	.02	.01	.24*
Self-Splitting	.02	.01	.19
Other-Splitting	.00	.01	-.03

Note. Table 8 continued on next page.

Table 8 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 3			
Stress	.00	.00	.09
Gender	-.05	.09	-.05
Anxiety	.02	.06	.04
Avoidance	.03	.06	.06
Gender*Anxiety	.05	.08	.07
Gender*Avoidance	-.10	.10	-.16
Narcissism	.02	.01	.26**
Self-Splitting	.02	.01	.22
Other-Splitting	.00	.01	-.04
Avoidance*Narcissism	.02	.01	.22*
Avoidance*Self-Splitting	.00	.01	-.03
Avoidance*Other-Splitting	.01	.01	.12

Note. $R^2 = .063$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .071$ for Step 2; $\Delta R^2 = .038$ for Step 3 (all *p*s < .05).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 9

Separate Models for Dominance by Gender

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
	Women (n = 66)		
Step 1			
Stress	-.02	.08	-.03
Anxiety	2.44	1.09	.33
Avoidance	-.27	1.04	-.03
Step 2			
Stress	-.02	.09	-.05
Anxiety	1.73	1.09	.23
Avoidance	1.06	1.13	.13
Narcissism	.21	.19	.14
Self-Splitting	-.19	.21	-.13
Other-Splitting	.36	.17	.28
Avoidance*Narcissism	.34	.17	.27
Avoidance*Self-Splitting	-.25	.20	-.20
Avoidance*Other-Splitting	-.08	.18	-.07

Note. Table 9 continued on next page. Women: R^2 = .093 for Step 1 (*ns*); ΔR^2 = .197 for Step 2 ($p < .05$).

Table 9 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
	Men (n = 61)		
Step 1			
Stress	.43	.10	.55
Anxiety	-4.00	1.71	-.32
Avoidance	5.72	1.53	.43
Step 2			
Stress	.55	.10	.70
Anxiety	-2.95	1.57	-.24
Avoidance	6.56	1.57	.49
Narcissism	.73	.20	.33
Self-Splitting	-.60	.32	-.26
Other-Splitting	-.40	.26	-.17
Avoidance*Narcissism	-.24	.22	-.11
Avoidance*Self-Splitting	.23	.21	.11
Avoidance*Other-Splitting	.45	.26	.18

Note. Men: R^2 = .408 for Step 1; ΔR^2 = .215 for Step 2 (ps < .001).

Table 10

Test of Mediators in Anxiety-Emotional Abuse Relationship (N =127)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 1			
Gender	5.96	4.24	.12
Anxiety	5.51	2.16	.24*
Avoidance	.71	2.32	.03
Step 2			
Gender	2.41	4.34	.05
Anxiety	3.27	2.41	.14
Avoidance	-.36	2.28	-.02
Narcissism	1.23	.37	.30**
Self-splitting	.88	.46	.21
Other-splitting	.33	.38	.08

Note. Table 10 continued on next page.

Table 10 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 3			
Gender	1.37	4.32	.03
Anxiety	2.80	2.38	.12
Avoidance	-.12	2.25	-.01
Narcissism	1.26	.36	.30**
Self-splitting	.91	.45	.22*
Other-splitting	.16	.38	.04
Avoidance*narcissism	.80	.33	.21*
Avoidance*self-splitting	-.37	.36	-.10
Avoidance*other-splitting	.82	.39	.21*

Note. Table 10 continued on next page.

Table 10 (cont'd)

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β
Step 4			
Gender	-.24	4.22	-.01
Anxiety	.78	2.40	.03
Avoidance	.05	2.17	.00
Narcissism	1.22	.35	.30**
Self-splitting	.40	.47	.10
Other-splitting	-.07	.38	-.02
Avoidance*narcissism	.65	.32	.17*
Avoidance*self-splitting	-.26	.35	-.07
Avoidance*other-splitting	.61	.38	.15
Stress	.53	.18	.33**

Note. $R^2 = .079$ for Step 1 ($p < .05$); $\Delta R^2 = .100$ for Step 2 ($p < .01$); $\Delta R^2 = .057$ for Step 3 ($p < .001$); $\Delta R^2 = .055$ for Step 4 ($p < .001$).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

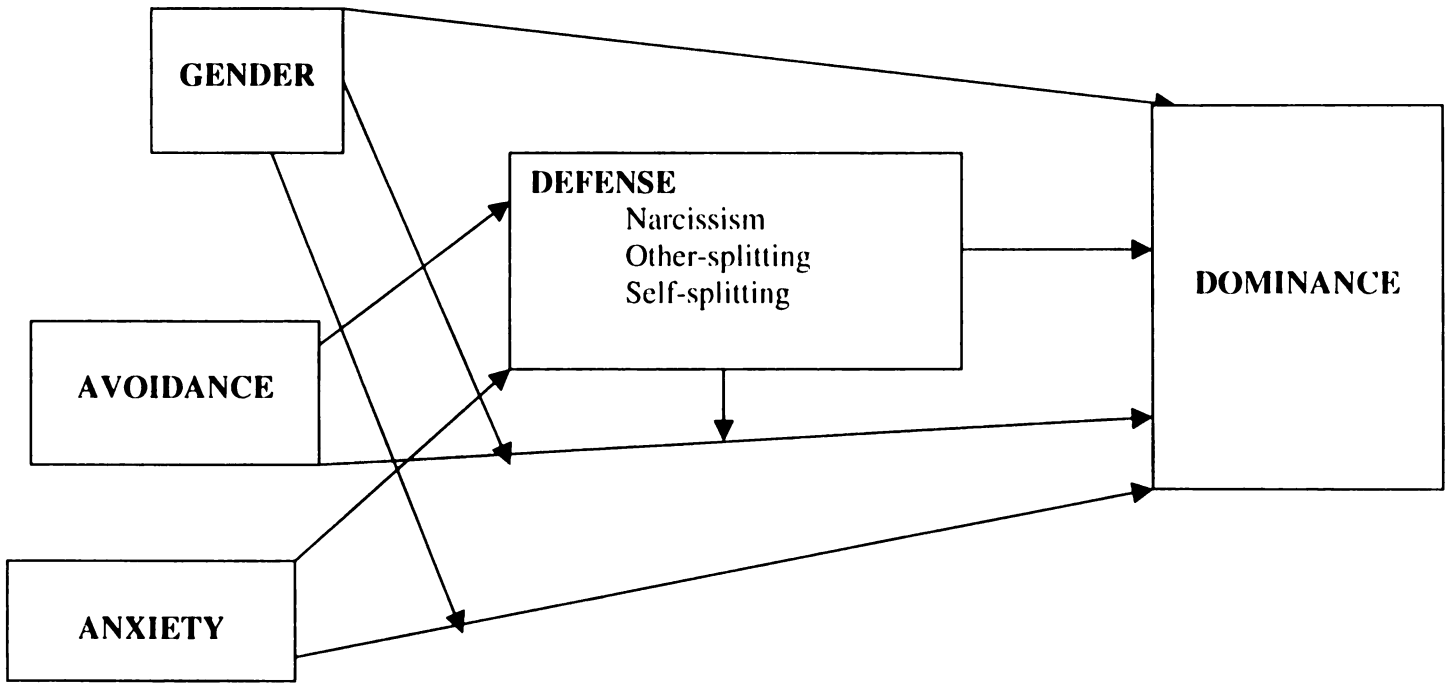

Figure 1. Hypotheses for Dominance. Gender would have a main effect on dominance and interaction effects with attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. Men would be more dominant than women. Insecurely attached men would be more dominant than more secure men, but secure women would be more dominant than insecure women. Defenses would predict dominance, mediate the attachment anxiety-dominance relationship, and moderate the attachment avoidance-dominance relationship. High levels of defense would strengthen the relationship between attachment avoidance and dominance.

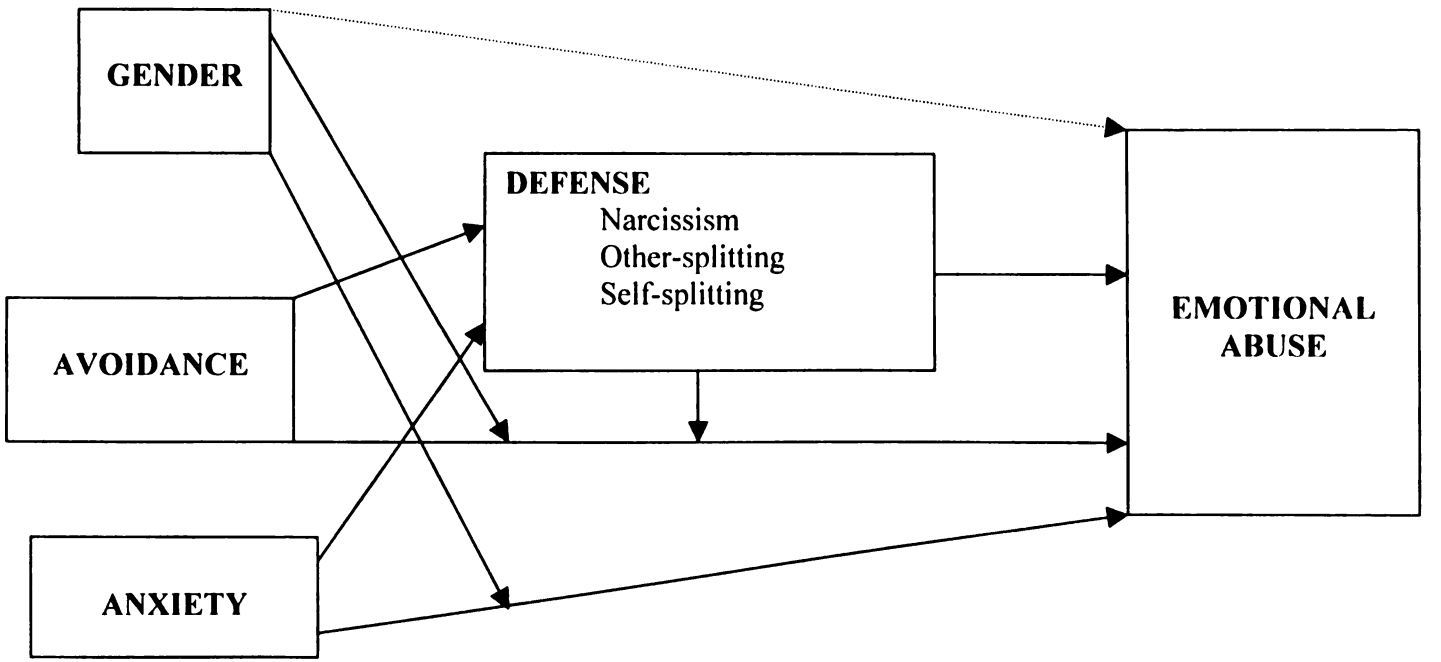

Figure 2. Hypotheses for Emotional Abuse. Gender would interact with both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety to predict emotional abuse. Insecurely attached women would report more emotional abuse than insecure men. Defenses would predict emotional abuse, mediate the attachment anxiety-abuse relationship, and moderate the attachment avoidance-abuse relationship. High levels of defense would strengthen the relationship between attachment avoidance and abuse.

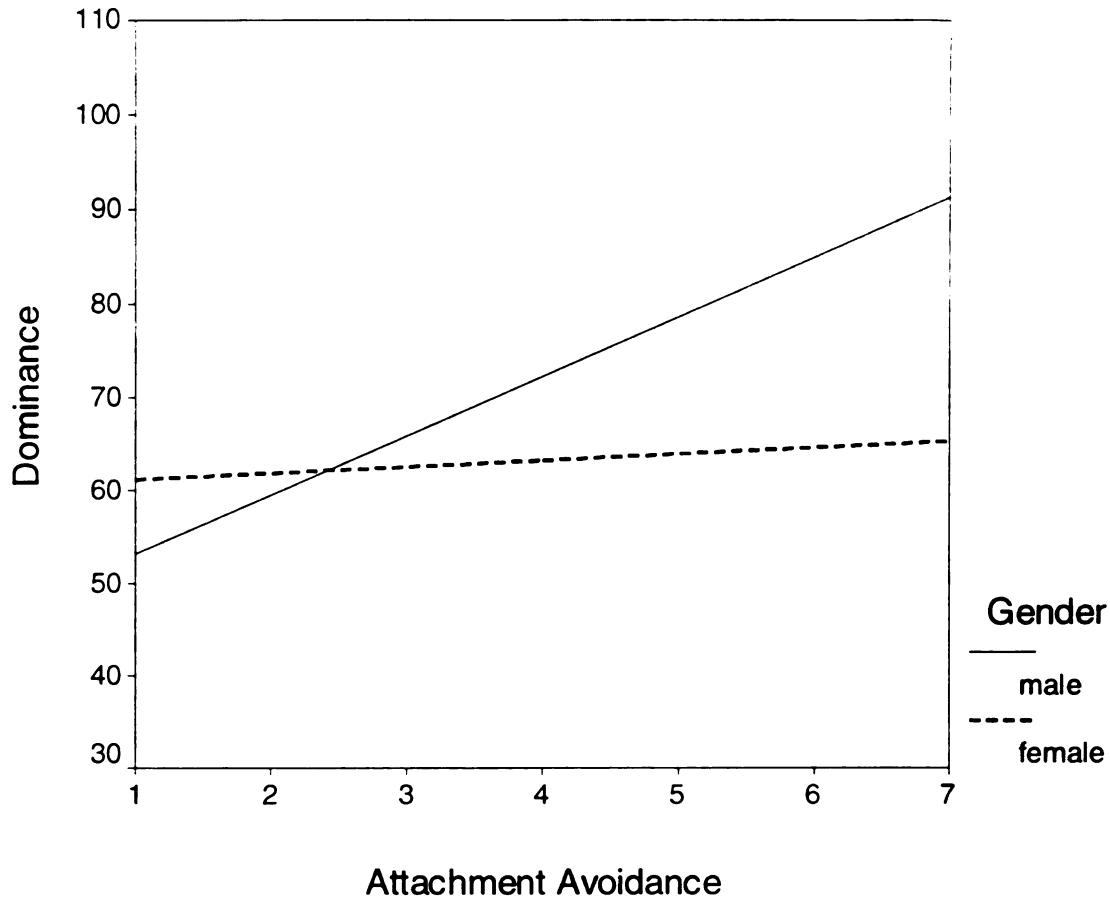

Figure 3. Gender-Avoidance Interaction in Predicting Dominance. Higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted higher levels of dominance only in men.

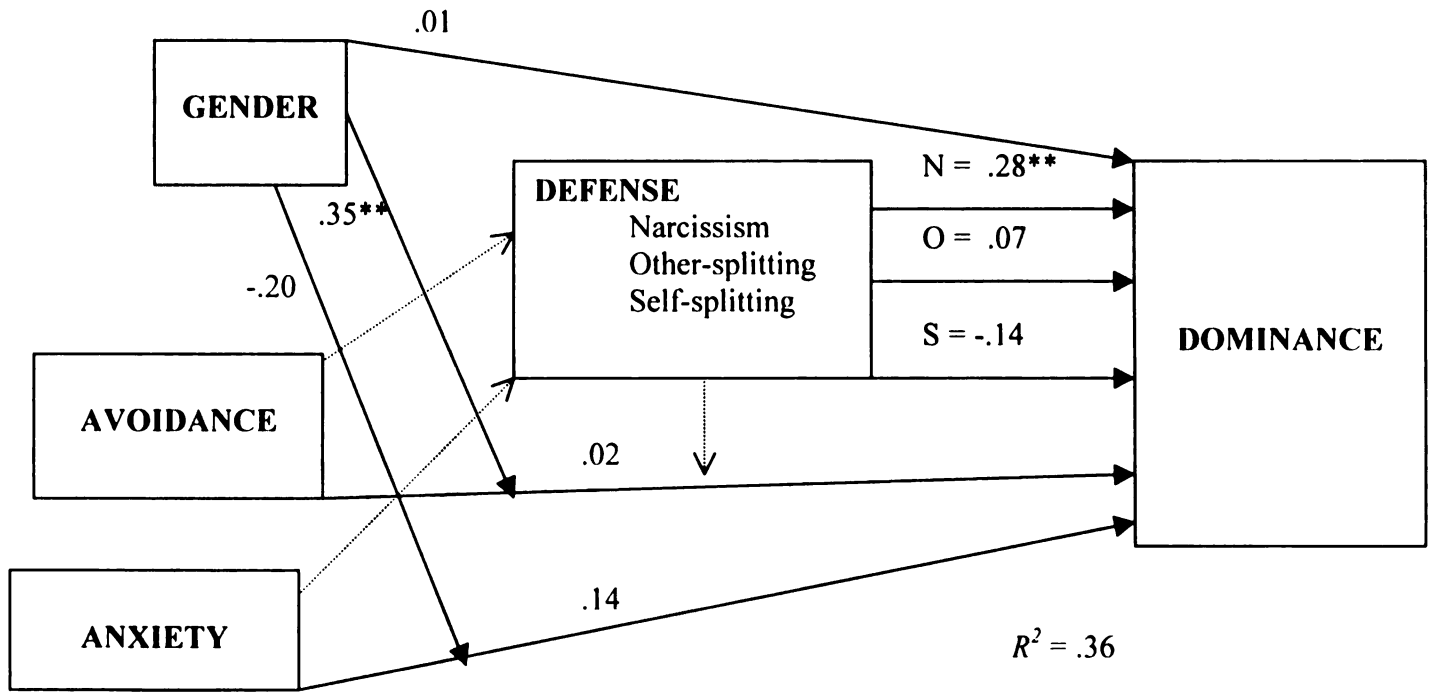

Figure 4. Standardized Regression Coefficients for Dominance. After controlling for stress level, gender significantly moderated the attachment avoidance-dominance relationship and narcissism was a significant predictor of dominance. Defensive mediation and moderation of the attachment insecurity-dominance relationship were not found.

**$p < .01$.

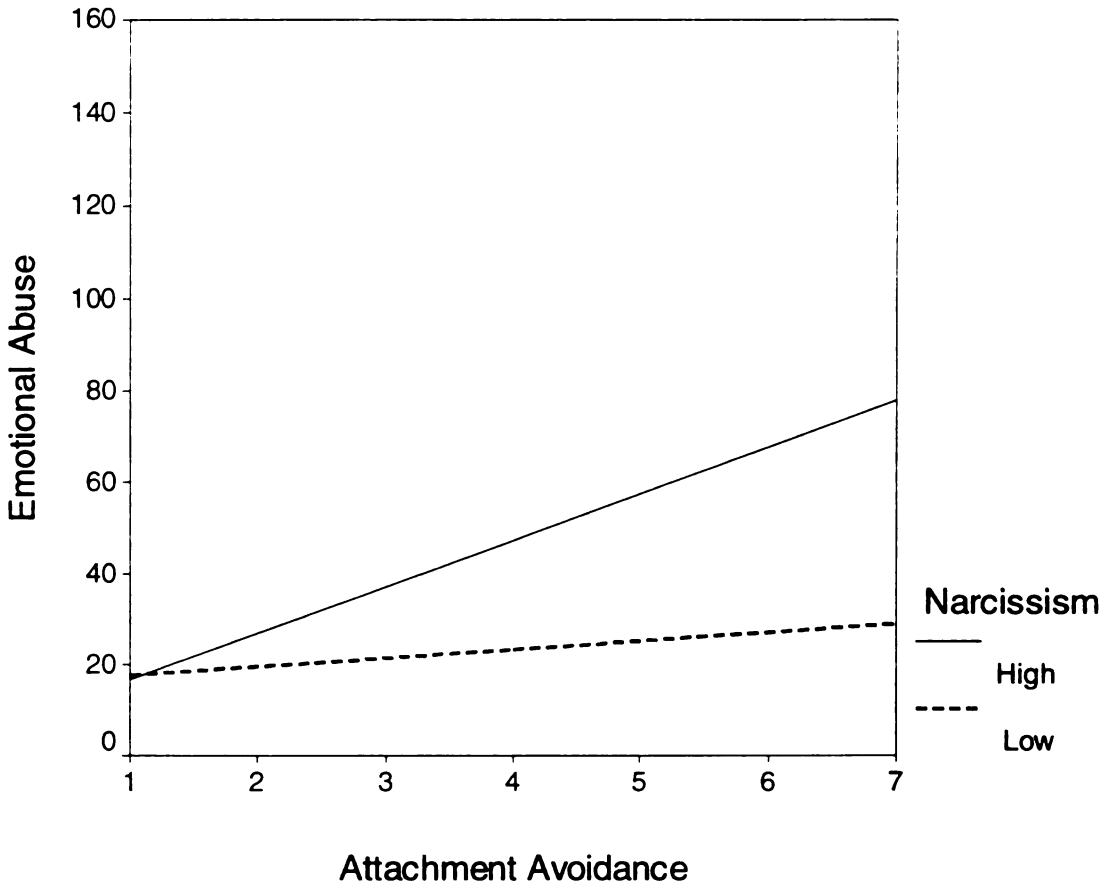

Figure 5. Avoidance-Narcissism Interaction in Predicting Emotional Abuse. Higher levels of attachment avoidance, when accompanied by above average levels of narcissistic defenses, predicted higher levels of emotional abusiveness. Attachment avoidance did not predict emotional abuse when levels of narcissism were average or below.

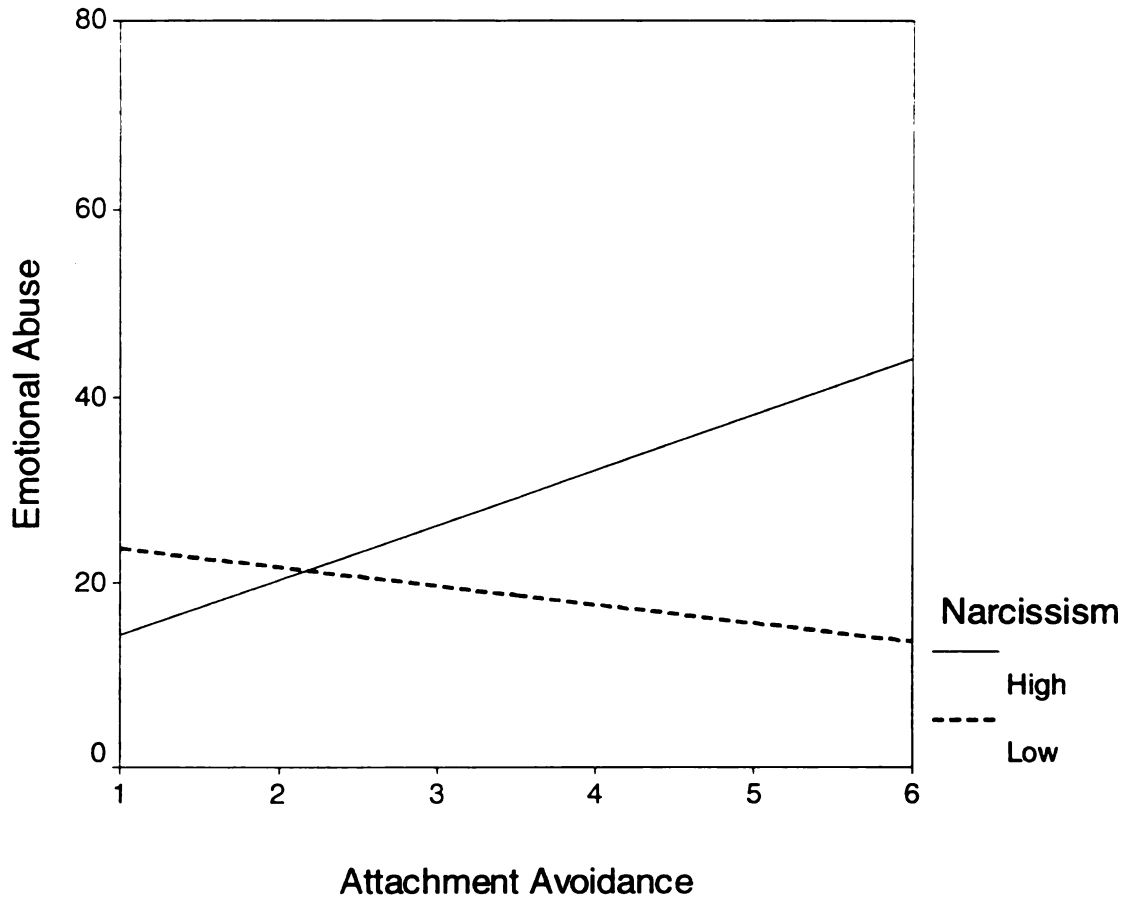

Figure 6. Avoidance-Narcissism Interaction in Predicting Emotional Abuse for Women. With higher than average levels of narcissism, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted more frequent emotional abuse by women. With average or below levels of narcissism, higher levels of attachment avoidance predicted less frequent emotional abuse by women.

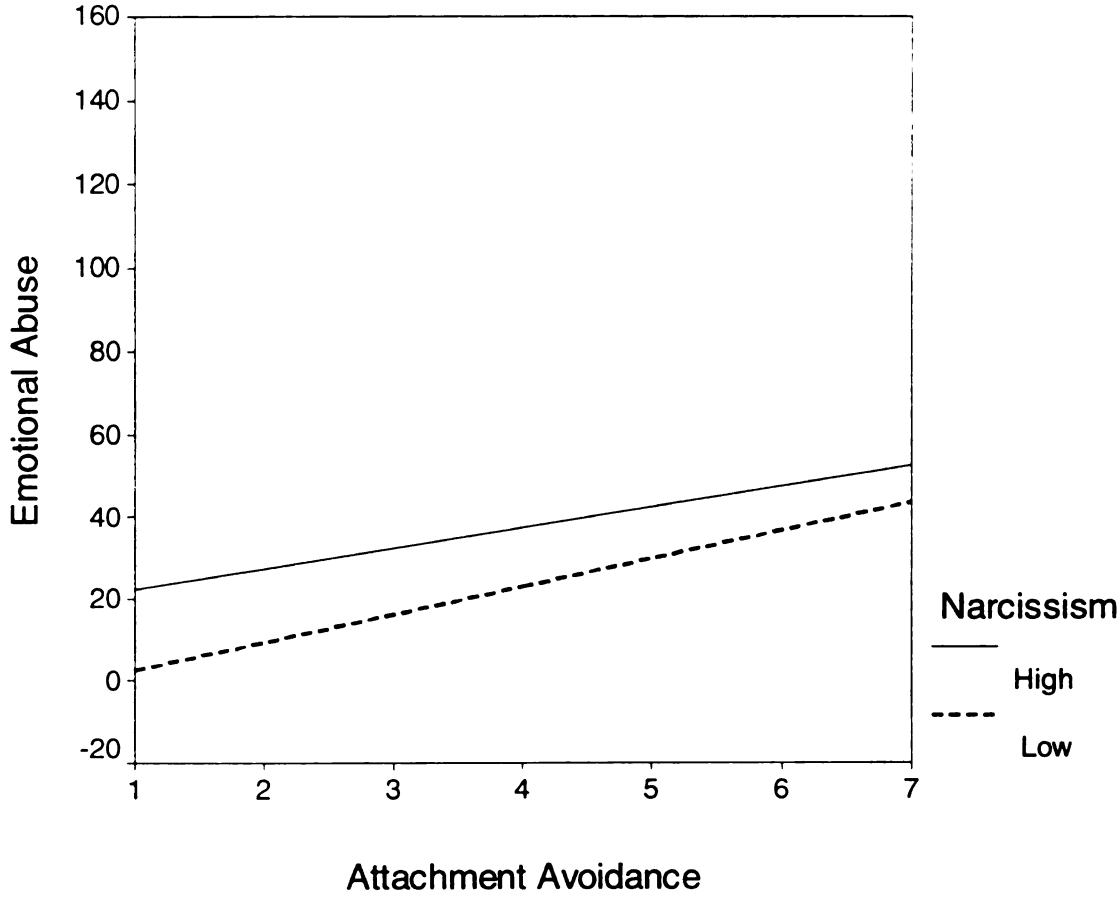

Figure 7. Avoidance-Narcissism Interaction in Predicting Emotional Abuse in Men. Higher levels of attachment avoidance in men predicted more frequent use of emotional abuse strategies. When narcissism levels were also higher than average, overall emotional abuse scores were higher regardless of level of attachment avoidance.

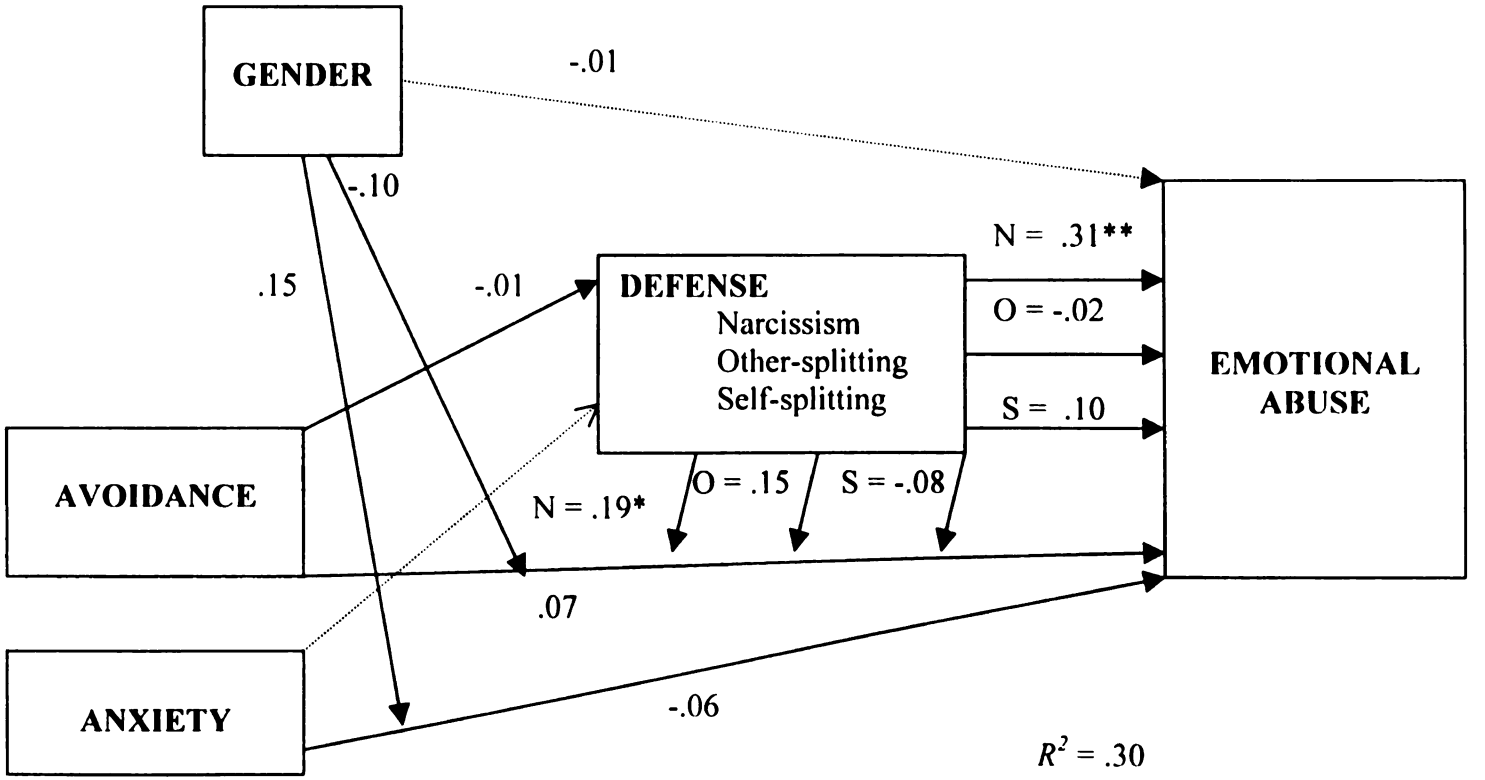

Figure 8. Standardized Regression Coefficients for Emotional Abuse. After controlling for stress level and with all the variable relationships in the model, narcissism significantly predicted emotional abuse and moderated the attachment avoidance-emotional abuse relationship. The defensive mediation of the attachment anxiety-emotional abuse relationship was not found. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

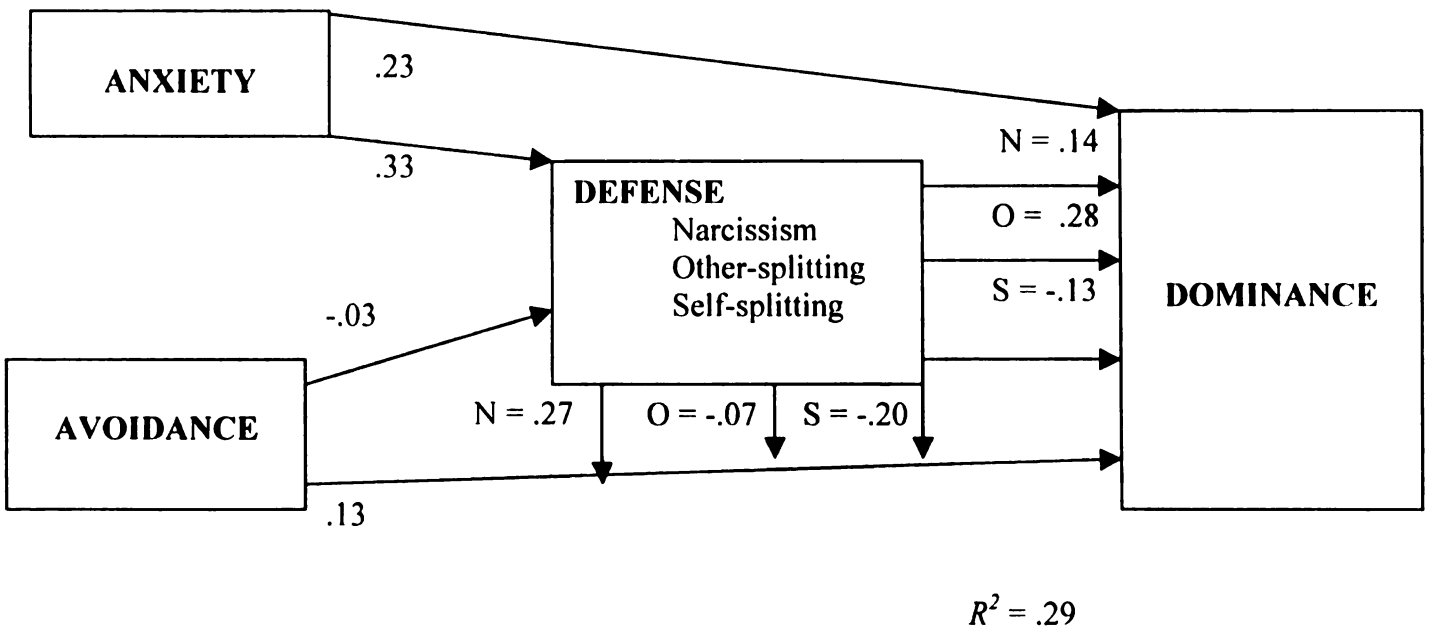

Figure 9. Posthoc Model of Dominance for Women. After controlling for stress level, other-splitting predicted dominance for women.

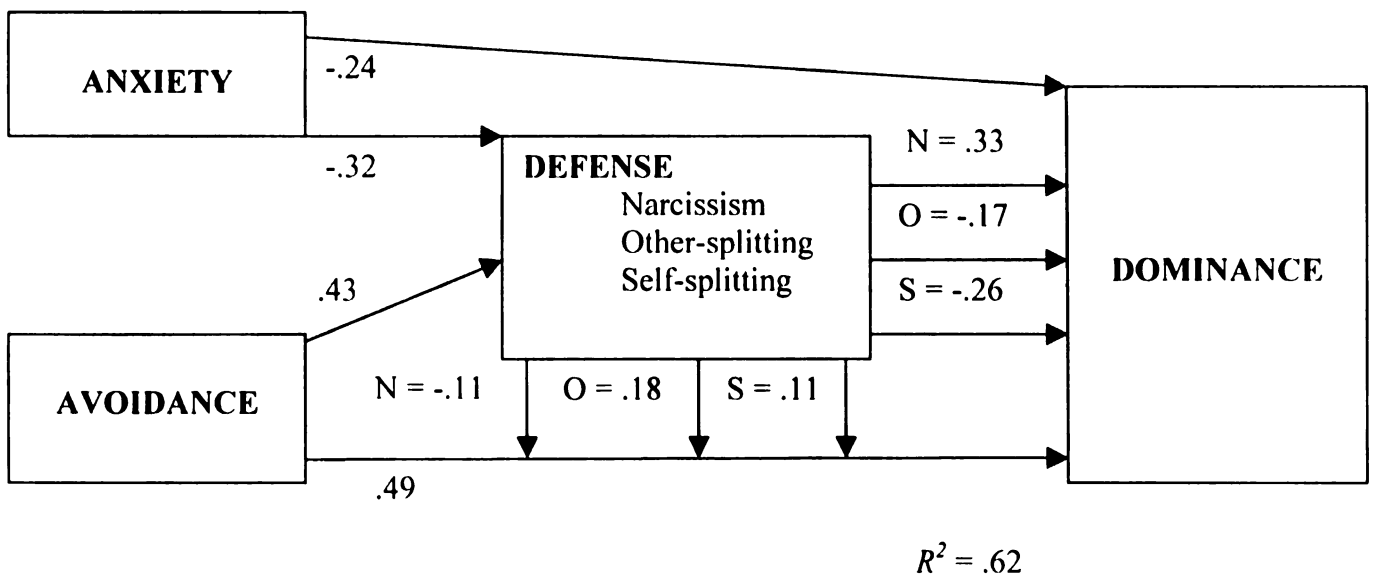

Figure 10. Posthoc Model of Dominance for Men. After controlling for stress, attachment avoidance and narcissism predicted dominance for men. The initially significant, negative relationship between attachment anxiety and dominance was not significant in the final model, nor were any potential mediators such as other-splitting.

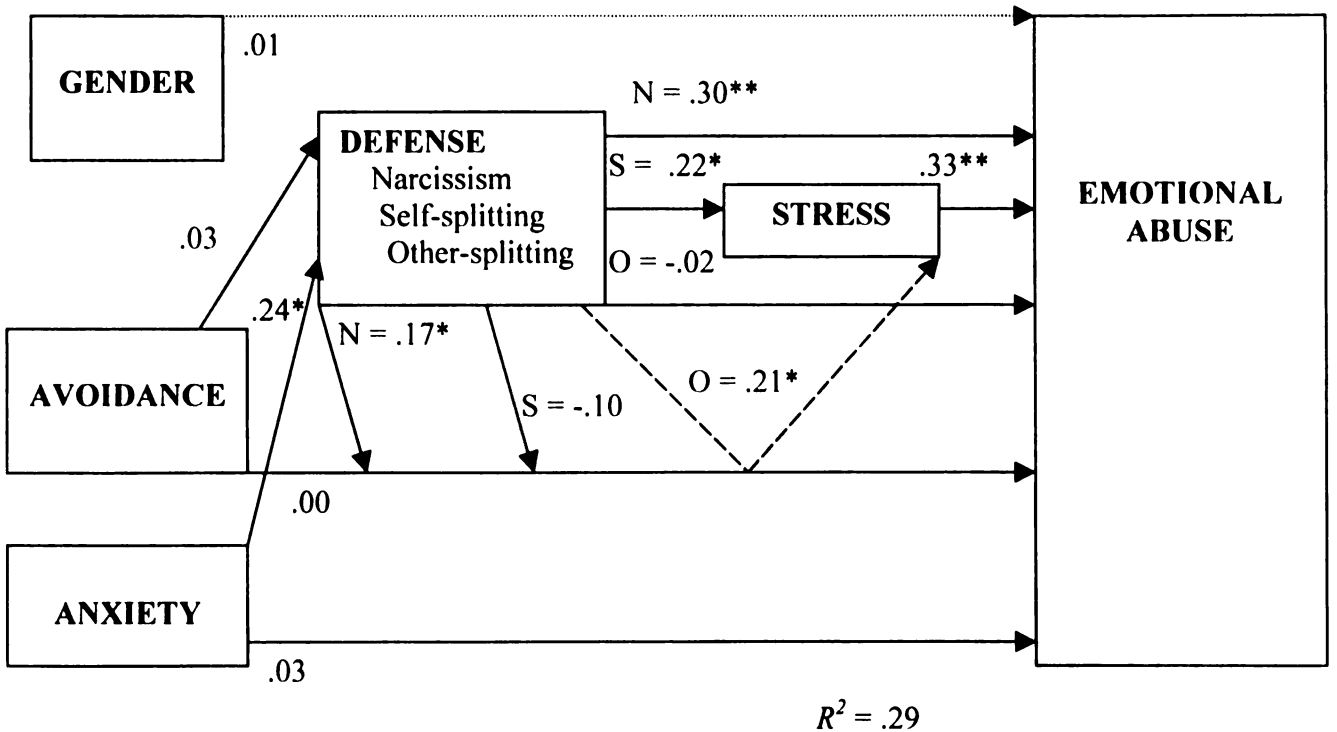

Figure 11. Posthoc Mediational Model for Emotional Abuse. The attachment anxiety-emotional abuse relationship was mediated by self-splitting, and the relationship between self-splitting and emotional abuse was mediated by level of stress. Narcissism predicted emotional abuse and moderated the attachment avoidance-emotional abuse relationship. Other-splitting moderated the attachment avoidance-emotional abuse relationship, and this moderated relationship was mediated by level of stress. Gender did not predict emotional abuse or moderate the attachment-abuse relationship.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for your expressed interest in this study of how people act in dating relationships. *Please read this form all the way through before signing below.* This project is being conducted by Barbara Gormley, a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology, under the supervision of Dr. Frederick G. Lopez, Professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education, 438 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

Students at Michigan State University are being asked to describe their partner relationships. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be given a packet of self-report questionnaires to complete. These questionnaires will ask about your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in dating relationships or close relationships with a romantic partner. It will take approximately 40 minutes to complete this survey packet. No risk to you should occur, but if you find any of the questions upsetting, please feel free to speak with the person administering the survey.

Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential. Your name will not at any time be attached to the answers you provide to the questions. Your name will not be on the survey packet you complete, nor will the number of the packet be attached to your name. This Informed Consent form will be kept separate from your survey packet. At no time will your name be released in association with this study unless your instructor requires notification of your participation for course credit. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time today with no penalty to you. Some instructors are assisting this project by providing course credit for participation. These instructors will provide extra credit alternatives for students who do not wish to participate in the survey. Should you choose to participate, we ask you to answer all of the questions as honestly as you possibly can. DO NOT put your name on the questionnaires.

If you would like to participate, read the brief statement below and print and sign your name and enter today's date on the lines below. If you have any questions about the study, please ask the person administering the survey or call Dr. Lopez at 517-355-8502 (flopez@msu.edu). Any concerns about your rights as a participant may be directed to UCRIHS Chair Dr. Kumar, 246 Administration Building, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824 (ucrihs@msu.edu), 517-355-2180.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study as described above:

_____	_____	_____
PRINT your name here	SIGN your name here	Today's date

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHICS

Instructions: Please ***circle the number*** (or fill in the blank) to describe yourself.

A. Gender: (1) Female (2) Male (3) Transgender

B. Age _____

C. Race/Ethnicity:

(1) African descent
(2) Arabic descent
(3) Asian/Pacific Islands
(4) Caucasian/White
(5) Hispanic
(5) Native/Indian/Alaskan
(6) Multiracial/Biracial

D. Nationality:

(1) International student
(2) U. S. A.

E. Student status:

(1) Freshman (2) Sophomore (3) Junior (4) Senior

(5) Other _____

F. Sexual orientation:

(1) Lesbian/gay man (2) Bisexual (3) Heterosexual (4) Celibate

G. How many romantic relationships have you had? _____

H. Romantic Relationship Status:

(1) I have a legal, religious, or social commitment/marriage to a partner
(2) I live with my partner, but we have not had a ceremony
(3) I am in a serious relationship with one partner, but we do not live together
(4) I am currently casually dating one or more partners
(5) I am not dating anyone, but I have dated in the past
(6) I have *never* had a close relationship with a romantic partner

I. If currently in a romantic relationship, how long ago did it begin? _____

J. If your most recent relationship ended, how long ago? _____

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL PROBLEMS INVENTORY

Directions: Using the scale next to each of the items below, indicate to what extent each of these concerns is currently a problem for you. CIRCLE the appropriate number.

	Not at all a Problem		**Moderate Problem**		**Very significant Problem**	
1. General anxiety.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Alcohol use.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Shyness.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Sexual functioning.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Depression.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Conflicts with parents.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Speech anxiety.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Dating difficulties.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Career choice.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Insomnia.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Drug use.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Inferiority feelings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Test anxiety.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Difficulties making friends....	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Trouble studying.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Academic performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Financial matters.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Alienation—not belonging...	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Adjustment to college.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Loneliness/isolation.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX D

EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS-REVISED

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

Disagree strongly			Neutral/mixed			Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

____ 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

____ 2. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.

____ 3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.

____ 4. I worry a lot about my relationships.

____ 5. My partner really understands me and my needs.

____ 6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.

____ 7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.

____ 8. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.

____ 9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.

____ 10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for her or him.

____ 11. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.

____ 12. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.

____ 13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.

____ 14. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.

____ 15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.

____ 16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

____ 17. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.

Disagree strongly			Neutral/mixed			Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

____ 18. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.

____ 19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.

____ 20. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.

____ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.

____ 22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

____ 23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.

____ 24. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.

____ 25. I tell my partner just about everything.

____ 26. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.

____ 27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.

____ 28. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.

____ 29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.

____ 30. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.

____ 31. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.

____ 32. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.

____ 33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.

____ 34. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.

____ 35. I talk things over with my partner.

____ 36. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.

APPENDIX E

SPLITTING INDEX

Instructions:
Using the scale next to each of the statements below, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of these statements by CIRCLING the most appropriate number.

	Strongly DISagree				Strongly Agree
1. I feel differently about myself when I am with different people.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. Being able to keep friends is one of my strong points.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. My feelings about myself shift dramatically.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The different parts of my personality are difficult to put together.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have doubts about my closest friends.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sometimes I am not sure who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My feelings about myself are very powerful, but they can change from one moment to the next.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My friendships are almost always satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My feelings about myself do not change easily.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have had many long-lasting friendships.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I sometimes feel "pulled apart" by my feelings about myself.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. My feelings toward those close to me remain constant.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have always been aware that my close friends really cared for me.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. My opinions of my friends rarely change.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I almost always feel good about those close to me.....	1	2	3	4	5
16. Who I am depends on how I am feeling.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Instructions:
In each of the following pairs of attitudes, choose the one that you MOST AGREE with. Mark your answer by CIRCLING EITHER A or B. Only mark one answer for each pair, and please do not skip any items.

1. A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.
   B. I am not good at influencing people.

2. A. Modesty doesn't become me.
   B. I am essentially a modest person.

3. A. I would do almost anything on a dare.
   B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.

4. A. When people compliment me, I sometimes get embarrassed.
   B. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.

5. A. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
   B. If I ruled the world, it would be a better place.

6. A. I can usually talk my way out of anything.
   B. I try to accept the consequences of my behavior.

7. A. I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
   B. I like to be the center of attention.

8. A. I will be a success.
   B. I am not too concerned about success.

9. A. I am no better or no worse than most people.
   B. I think I am a special person.

10. A. I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
    B. I see myself as a good leader.

11. A. I am assertive.
    B. I wish I were more assertive.

12. A. I like having authority over other people.
    B. I don't mind following orders.

13. A. I find it easy to manipulate people.
    B. I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.

14. A. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.
    B. I usually get the respect that I deserve.

15. A. I can read people like a book.
    B. People are sometimes hard to understand.

16. A. I just want to be reasonably happy.
    B. I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.

17. A. I try not to be a show off.
    B. I will usually show off if I get the chance.

18. A. Sometimes I tell good stories.
    B. Everybody likes to hear my stories.

19. A. I expect a great deal from other people.
    B. I like to do things for other people.

20. A. I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
    B. I take my satisfactions as they come.

21. A. Compliments embarrass me.
    B. I like to be complimented.

22. A. I have a strong will to power.
    B. Power for its own sake doesn't interest me.

23. A. I don't care about new fads and fashions.
    B. I like to start new fads and fashions.

24. A. I really like to be the center of attention.
    B. It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.

25. A. Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
    B. People always seem to recognize my authority.

26. A. I would prefer to be a leader.
    B. It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.

27. A. People sometimes believe what I tell them.
    B. I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.

28. A. I am a born leader.
    B. Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.

29. A. I wish someone would someday write my biography.
    B. I don't like people to pry into my life for any reason.

30. A. I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
    B. I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.

31. A. I am more capable than other people.
    B. There is a lot that I can learn from other people.

32. A. I am much like everybody else.
    B. I am an extraordinary person.

33. A. I am envious of other people's good fortune.
    B. When something good happens to other people, I am happy for them.

APPENDIX G

THE DOMINANCE SCALE

Instructions:
People have many different ways of relating to each other. The following statements are all different ways of relating to or thinking about your partner. Please read each statement and CIRCLE the number that corresponds to how much you agree with it.

	Strongly DISagree	Dis-agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My partner often has good ideas.....	1	2	3	4
2. I try to keep my partner from spending time with opposite sex friends.....	1	2	3	4
3. If my partner and I can't agree, I usually have the final say.....	1	2	3	4
4. It bothers me when my partner makes plans without talking to me first.....	1	2	3	4
5. My partner doesn't have enough sense to make important decisions.....	1	2	3	4
6. I hate losing arguments with my partner.....	1	2	3	4
7. My partner should not keep any secrets from me.	1	2	3	4
8. I insist on knowing where my partner is at all times.....	1	2	3	4
9. When my partner and I watch TV, I hold the remote control.....	1	2	3	4
10. My partner and I generally have equal say about decisions.....	1	2	3	4
11. It would bother me if my partner made more money than I did.....	1	2	3	4
12. I generally consider my partner's interests as much as mine.....	1	2	3	4
13. I tend to be jealous.....	1	2	3	4
14. Things are easier in my relationship if I am in charge.....	1	2	3	4

	Strongly DISagree	Dis-agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Sometimes I have to remind my partner of who's boss.....	1	2	3	4
16. I have a right to know everything my partner does.....	1	2	3	4
17. It would make me mad if my partner did something I had said not to do.....	1	2	3	4
18. Both partners in a relationship should have equal say about decisions.....	1	2	3	4
19. If my partner and I can't agree, I should have the final say.....	1	2	3	4
20. I understand there are some things my partner may not want to talk about with me.	1	2	3	4
21. My partner needs to remember that I am in charge.....	1	2	3	4
22. My partner is a talented person.....	1	2	3	4
23. It's hard for my partner to learn new things.	1	2	3	4
24. People usually like my partner.....	1	2	3	4
25. My partner makes a lot of mistakes.....	1	2	3	4
26. My partner can handle most things that happen.	1	2	3	4
27. I sometimes think my partner is unattractive.	1	2	3	4
28. My partner is basically a good person.....	1	2	3	4
29. My partner doesn't know how to act in public.	1	2	3	4
30. I often tell my partner how to do something.	1	2	3	4
31. I dominate my partner.....	1	2	3	4
32. I have a right to be involved with anything my partner does.....	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX H

MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURE OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Instructions:
The following questions ask about the relationship with your partner or ex-partner. Please report how often each of these things has happened in the last six months (or the last six months of the relationship if it is over). Please circle a number using the scale below to indicate how often you have done each of the following things, and a number to indicate how often your partner has done each of the following things. Indicate how many times you have done this where it says 'you' and how many times your partner has done this where it says 'your partner.' If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past six months, but it happened before that, circle '7.'

(1) Once *(4) 6-10 times* *(7) Never in the past six months, but before that*
(2) Twice *(5) 11-20 times* *(0) This has never happened*
(3) 3-5 times *(6) Over 20 times*

	Once	**Twice**	**3-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**20+**	**Not in 6 months**	**Never**
1. Asked the other person where they had been or who they were with in a suspicious manner.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. Secretly searched through the other person's belongings.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. Tried to stop the other person from seeing certain friends or family members.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. Complained that the other person spends too much time with friends.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. Got angry because the other person went somewhere without telling (you).								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	Once	Twice	3-5	6-10	11-20	20+	Not in 6 months	Never

6. Tried to make the other person feel guilty for not spending enough time together.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

7. Checked up on the other person by asking friends or relatives where they were or who they were with.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

8. Said or implied that the other person was stupid.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

9. Called the other person worthless.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

10. Called the other person ugly.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

11. Criticized the other person's appearance.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

12. Called the other person a loser, failure, or similar term.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

13. Belittled the other person in front of other people.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	Once	Twice	3-5	6-10	11-20	20+	Not in 6 months	Never

14. Said that someone else would be a better partner (spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend).

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

15. Became so angry that they were unable or unwilling to talk.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

16. Acted cold or distant when angry.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

17. Refused to have any discussion of a problem.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

18. Changed the subject on purpose when the other person was trying to discuss the problem.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

19. Refused to acknowledge a problem that the other person felt was important.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

20. Sulked or refused to talk about an issue.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

21. Intentionally avoided the other person during a conflict or disagreement.

You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	Once	Twice	3-5	6-10	11-20	20+	Not in 6 months	Never
22. Became angry enough to frighten the other person.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23. Put (your) face right in front of the other person's face to make a point more forcefully.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24. Threatened to hit the other person.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25. Threatened to throw something at the other person.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26. Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something in front of the other person.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27. Drove recklessly to frighten the other person.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28. Stood or hovered over the other person during a conflict or disagreement.								
You	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Your partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0