

# Dyadic Exchanges of Emotional Support: Examining Interpersonal Alignment

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## Background

- In interpersonal relationships, the benefits of receiving emotional support may depend on how well a person's needs are met. However, this has rarely been assessed, especially with both relationship partners.
- We used a novel paradigm to elicit an opportunity for partners to provide support to each other.

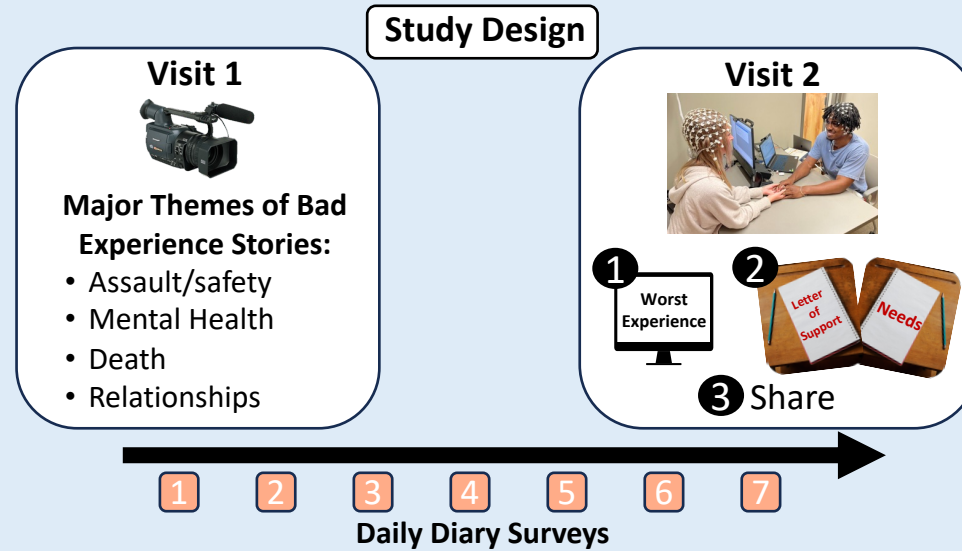
## Objectives

- Explore needs-support alignment between partners
- Examine the relationship between alignment and daily (1) well-being, (2) feeling loved, and (3) positive interactions

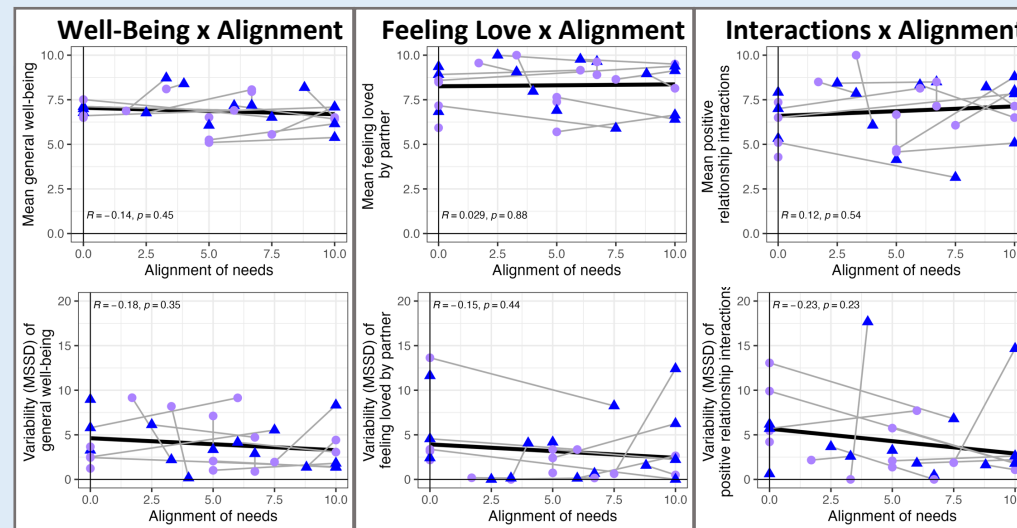
## Methods

- 15 dyads ( $N = 30$ ) in self-affirmed romantic relationships
- Partners wrote emotional support letters after viewing a pre-taped video of their partner retelling a bad experience
  - Needs:** "What would you like your partner to write?"
  - Support:** "Write a letter of support to your partner."
- Two coders of responses → needs-alignment score
- Daily diary surveys each night and morning

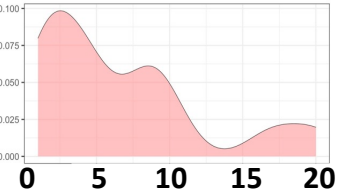
# Most people (23 out of 30) provide emotional support aligned with their romantic partner's needs, regardless of daily life experiences.



Qualitative Alignment Examples	
Need/s	Support
<b>*Strong alignment</b> "to give (me) <b>space</b> when needed"	"If there are days that you need <b>space</b> to process emotions about this experience, I'll always be respectful of that..."
"it was <b>bad</b> , but I've got over it. I <b>not only carry the wounds</b> from that encounter <b>but also the experience</b> "	"it was a <b>bad</b> experience, but you didn't have a choice... You went through and <b>came out stronger</b> and <b>knew who/what to avoid</b> "
<b>*Weak alignment</b> "he <b>will try and understand my emotions and problems I still feel</b> from that time, I still get depressed and I really just need him to <b>be there for me</b> "	"I'm sorry it seems like you had to experience those kind of feelings on your own... I just wish I could console you and help you take your mind off those things <b>but</b> sometimes those are things you just need to feel... <b>keep going and don't give up!</b> "
"she <b>understands how I was feeling</b> in the video and during the event that I was talking about... there is <b>nothing I could say or do that would cause me to lose the people I care most about...</b> "	"I am struggling with the fact that <b>I am not struggling...</b> I had a feeling you were going to say something to that effect, but I <b>thought it would be about me</b> and the times I have lost my cool..."



Duration of Relationship in Years



Poster & References:



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## Core Elements of Love (Xia et al., 2023)

- Positive Responsiveness: 20 of 30 (66%)
- Authentic Connection: 24 of 30 (80%)
- Sense of Stability: 14 of 30 (46.6%)

Demographics	
Age M (SD); Range	28.4(5.03); 18 - 40
Gender	50% men, 50% women
Sexual Orientation	83% Heterosexual, 17% LGBTQ+
Race/Ethnicity	75% Caucasian, 16% Latine, 13% Asian, 3% African American, 3% Middle Eastern
Relationship	10 married; 11 cohabitating