Learning Objectives

• The ABC(DE)’s of Romantic Relationships
• Jealousy
• Deterioration of Relationships
• Loneliness
• Satisfaction in Relationships
• Communications Skills
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

Social-exchange theory

- Development of a relationship reflects the unfolding of social exchanges
- The rewards & costs of maintaining the relationship as opposed to ending it
- Positive factors encourage partners to maintain and enhance the relationship
- Negative factors encourage partners to let it deteriorate
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

A is for Attraction

• Factors that increase attraction
• Good mood
• Physical attractiveness
• Similarity in attitudes
• Mutual liking
A is for Attraction

Studies Indicate

- Men tend to focus on sex and fun
- Women tend to focus on communication and reciprocity

Same Sex Couples

- Male couples more likely to entertain sexual behavior early
- Females more cautious
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

B is for Building

- Small talk
- Superficial conversation
- Allows exchange of information
- “Name, rank, and serial number”
- Stresses breadth of topic coverage rather than in-depth discussion
- Allows people to explore similarities and attractions
B is for Building

Small talk begins with the opening line

- Verbal salutes
- Personal inquiries
- Compliments
- References to your mutual surroundings
- References to people or events outside the immediate setting
- References to the other person’s behavior
- References to your own behavior or to yourself
B is for Building

Self-disclosure

- The revelation of personal, perhaps intimate, information, i.e., opening up
- Research shows that intimate information should not be disclosed too early in the relationship
- Rapid self-disclosure is the norm online
- Gender-type differences
  - Masculine-types less willing
  - Female-types more willing
CRITICAL THINKING

You cannot develop a relationship without some self-disclosure, but too much, too soon can seem strange or worse – give the appearance you are out of control.

Can you think of any rules for controlling the outflow of personal information?
B is for Building

Surface contact

- Probing phase of building a relationship
- People seek common ground and check out feelings of attraction
- Provided by small talk and initial self-disclosure
- Often takes place easily through cyberspace
B is for Building

Seek ways to introduce variety and maintain interest

Show that one cares and has trust for the other

Mutuality
- Members of a couple come to regard themselves as “we,” no longer two “I’s” who happen to be in the same place at the same time
- A sign that the relationship will continue
Do you believe it is possible for a person to maintain complete individuality while at the same time investing in mutuality with another person?

Explain.
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

C is for Continuation

- Intimacy
  - Feelings of closeness and connectedness that are marked by sharing one’s inmost thoughts and feelings
  - Key ingredient to passionate relationship
  - Intimate relationships involve trust, caring, and acceptance
  - Can be emotionally intimate without being sexually intimate
C is for Continuation

**Intimacy**

- Important for psychological well-being
- Intimacy and self-esteem
  - Too little or too much self-esteem may interfere with ability to be intimate
- Caring is an emotional bond that allows intimacy to develop
C is for Continuation

**Mutual cyclical growth**

- The need for one’s partner promotes commitment
- The commitment promotes acts that enhance the relationship
- These acts build trust
- One’s partner’s commitment to the relationship increases

Men are more reluctant to make a commitment
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

D is for Deterioration

- Factors that can lead to the dissolution of a relationship include
  - Boredom
  - Negative evaluation of partner
  - Forgetting or ignoring important dates
  - Perceived inequity in the relationship
  - General dissatisfaction
  - Jealousy
D is for Deterioration

Jealousy

- Aroused by suspected threat of rival
- Evident across cultures, but more intense and frequent in cultures with strong traditional male gender roles
- Reduces affection and self-esteem
- May increase feelings of insecurity, rejection, anxiety, and mistrust
- Is a common reason why relationships fail
- Causes include both past experiences and personality traits
- “Normal” vs. “obsessional” jealousy
D is for Deterioration

**Jealousy and evolutionary theory**
- Males more jealous of sexual infidelity
- Concern over paternity of partner’s offspring
- Females more jealous of emotional infidelity
- Concern over resources for childrearing
- Sex differences not apparent in same-sex couples

**Jealousy and cognitive theory**
- More jealousy when infidelity attributed to internal causes (personal choice/attraction), and less when attributed to external causes (alcohol)
D is for Deterioration

Responses to the breakdown of a relationship

- Active responses to deterioration
- Doing things that may enhance the relationship
- Deciding to end the relationship
- Passive responses to deterioration
- Waiting for something to happen
- Doing little or nothing
ABCDE’s of Romantic Relationships

E is for Ending

- Reasons for ending relationships
- Partners find little satisfaction in the affiliation
- Barriers to leaving the relationship are low
- Alternative partners are available
- Problems in communication exist
- Jealousy

People differ in how well they deal with breakups
E is for Ending

Anxious people
- Preoccupied with ex-partner
- Suffer emotional and physical distress
- Attempt to reestablish relationship
- May experience anger and vengefulness

Emotionally secure people
- Seek social support from friends and families

Blaming oneself for the breakup is stressful
E is for Ending

Stalking
- Following or observing a person persistently, especially because of obsession with the person
- Can occur online as well as in person

Strong commitment or belief will overcome problems, can save relationships

Moving on can be a sign of healthy decision
Loneliness

- A state of painful social isolation
- Feeling cut off from others
- Associated with physical and psychological problems
  - Raised blood pressure, cancer, higher mortality rate
  - Depression

Solitude

- Self-chosen isolation
- Characterized by self-discovery, inner peace, reflection, spirituality
Loneliness

Causes of Loneliness

- Lack of social skills
- Lack of interest in other people
- Lack of empathy
- Failure to disclose personal information
- Cynicism about human nature
- Demanding too much too soon
- General pessimism
- External locus of control
Loneliness

Effects of Loneliness

- Low self-confidence
- Introversion
- Unhappiness
- Emotional instability
- Physical health problems
Loneliness

Coping with Loneliness

- Challenge feelings of pessimism
- Challenge cynicism about human nature
- Challenge the idea that failure in social relationships is awful and is thus a valid reason for giving up on them
- Get out among people
- Make numerous social contacts
Loneliness

Coping with Loneliness

- Be assertive
- Become a good listener
- Give people a chance to know you
- Fight fair
- Remember that one is worthy of friends
- Visit the college counseling center
Satisfaction in Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gottman et al studied conflict resolution in couples</th>
<th>Conflict itself is not necessarily destructive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolution style is important</td>
<td>Negative outcomes associated with defensiveness; excessive female agreeability; negative non-verbals; stonewalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive outcomes associated with displays of humor, empathy and affection; mutual effort; listening non-defensively</td>
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## Satisfaction in Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Resolution</th>
<th>Dissatisfaction associated with</th>
<th>More intense physiological arousal</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Defensiveness</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Stonewalling” by the male</td>
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<td>Compliance or verbalizing contempt by the female</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other nonverbal behavior, e.g., facial expressions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Satisfaction in Relationships

Conflict Resolution

- Satisfaction associated with
- Displays of humor, empathy, and affection
- Mutual effort to solve problems
- Listening to one’s partner in a non-defensive manner
Communication Skills

Communication is the key to healthy relationships

Effective communication about sexual desires and needs is important

Obstacles to sexual communication

- Belief that talking about sex is vulgar
- Use of different terms
- Belief that partner should know
- Differences in or lack of communication skills
Communication Skills

- Discuss the difficulties of talking about sex
- Pick a time and place to discuss the issue
- Request permission to bring up a topic
- Let partner know it is okay to give feedback

Getting the conversation started
Communication Skills

- Active listening
- Reflect and paraphrase
- Reinforcing the other person’s willingness to communicate
- Showing that one values one’s partner even when disagreement exists

Skilled listening involves
Communication Skills

- Ask close-ended questions
- Use self-disclosure to develop intimacy
- Grant permission for the other person to say something that might be upsetting

Learn about one’s partner’s needs
## Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accentuate the positive</th>
<th>Use verbal cues</th>
<th>Use nonverbal cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Let partner know when he or she is doing something correctly | • Ask for feedback; make suggestions | • Take turns petting  
• Guide partner’s hand  
• Use signals to indicate pleasure |
Communication Skills

- Evaluate your motives
- Deliver criticism in private
- Be specific about behaviors
- Express displeasure in terms of your own feelings
- Avoid attacking partner’s personality
- Keep criticism and complaints to the present
- Express criticism constructively
- Express criticism positively and with a concrete request
Communication Skills

- Clarify one’s goals for the relationship
- Ask clarifying questions
- Acknowledge and paraphrase the criticism
- If at fault, admit it and work to solve problem
Negotiating differences

Negotiate if you feel there are merits on both sides of an argument

- Work out an exchange
- Are there other issues going on?
Communication Skills

Handling impasses → Look at the situation from the other person's perspective → Put the problem aside for a while

Accept there are differences → Agree to disagree

- Disagreement itself does not destroy relationships
- Conflict is inevitable
- How it is resolved is the key to satisfaction