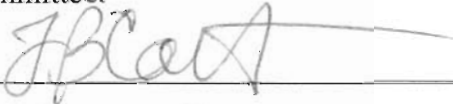


FAMILIALISM, PRIVACY OF PROBLEMS AND EGALITARIANISM AS  
PREDICTORS OF RECOGNITION AND DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

by

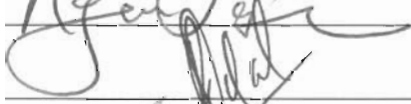
Adriana Pilafova  
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Familialism, Privacy of Problems and Egalitarianism as Predictors of Recognition and  
Disclosure of Abuse

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my grandfather who passed away prior to the completion of my doctoral degree. Thank you for being one of my biggest supporters, for guidance and care and for believing in me throughout my life. I could not have done this without you!

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## ABSTRACT

### FAMILIALISM, PRIVACY OF PROBLEMS AND EGALITARIANISM AS PREDICTORS OF RECOGNITION AND DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

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George Mason University, 2011

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In the field of intimate partner violence, research often explores differences among ethnic groups in the experience of and responses to abuse. This study investigated the possibility that such differences are caused by variance in particular cultural values. Specifically, it examined how two cultural values (egalitarianism and individualism) are related to tolerance of and timeframe for disclosure of abuse. According to Hofstede's (1980, 1983) seminal work on cultural values, egalitarianism is defined as the extent to which members of the culture accept egalitarian distribution of power, and individualism is defined as an emphasis on personal autonomy, self-fulfillment and freedom of choice, including the extent to which family privacy and wellbeing is a priority. In order to assess at what point a victim might recognize abuse as problematic, we constructed a series of scenarios of increasing abuse severity levels, and asked a sample of graduate and undergraduate international students from three universities in the Washington DC area ( $N = 203$ ) to read and respond to them. Analyses showed that participants' concern about psychological

abuse grew as severity of psychological abuse increased. The nature of this increase was predicted by their egalitarian values, showing that the more egalitarian people were the more quickly they became concerned. Results also showed that people's concern was high as soon as the abuse became physical and remained high as the violence worsened. In addition, mediational analysis found that tolerance of abuse was a full mediator of the relationship between egalitarianism and disclosure, showing that people's egalitarian beliefs influenced how tolerant they were of abuse, which in turn influenced when they indicated they would disclose. Last, in the absence of egalitarian values, high familial values predicted earlier disclosure of abuse. Among other implications for research and practice, these results suggest the utility of using cultural values to understand reactions to abuse and highlight the differences in people's reactions to levels of severity in psychological abuse and physical abuse. Further discussion of the findings, implications for research and practice are also provided.

## INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence is a serious and widespread issue. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) has defined IPV as verbal, physical, and/or sexual abuse of one partner by the other in an intimate relationship (Acevedo, 2000). In 1998, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsored a large study to assess men and women's experiences with violent victimization. This study assessed 16,000 randomly selected individuals (8,000 women and 8,000 men), and showed intimate partner violence (IPV) to be a very serious public health issue. Twenty-five percent of the 8,000 surveyed women and eight percent of the 8,000 surveyed men were physically and/or sexually assaulted by a current or former partner in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In addition, their study estimated that four million women are assaulted by a romantic partner each year (Tjaden, & Thoennes, 1998). Furthermore, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (2006) found that approximately three women are murdered by a romantic partner each day. Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) along with other large studies have documented that abuse occurs in people of all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses (Tjaden, & Thoennes, 1998; McFarlane et al. 1997; West et al. 1998; Krishnan et al. 2001; Kaukinen 2004). Last, IPV is a global problem. The United Nations Task Force on Violence Against Women (2007) gathered data from the Economic and Social Commission of each continent and found

that physical, sexual and psychological abuse against intimate partners are prevalent in all countries of the world.

Knowing that IPV is a serious problem, government agencies such as the National Institute of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as other agencies like the NCADV are calling attention to violence prevention and victims' help-seeking. There are a variety of sources available to victims. Some of these include outreach programs and other services such as IPV shelters, individual and group counseling, employment workshops, housing programs, finance help, child support and victim advocates (<http://www.ywcasandiego.org/>; <http://www.apnagar.org/services/services.shtml>).

Even though a variety of resources exist, a large study of 491 abused women examined women's help-seeking behaviors and showed that 82% of victims did not reach out to agencies, police, or counselors (Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005). In the literature exploring patterns of help-seeking, a finding that emerges is that ethnic minorities<sup>1</sup> tend to seek formal help less often than their Caucasian counterparts (Acevedo, 2000; Bauer et al., 2000; Dutton et al., 2000). The differences in help-seeking suggest that there is something about ethnicity that operates as an obstacle to help-seeking. However, it is unclear how or why this is so. In this study, I will explore both of these questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2000 US Census, ethnic minorities represent members of US society that do not identify with the dominant Caucasian culture. They are broken down into several categories: African American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Bi/Multi racial. In the remainder of the paper, I will use the term ethnic minorities to refer to members of these cultural groups.

## **The Help-seeking Process in IPV**

In order to better understand how culture might affect help-seeking, it could be helpful to begin by clarifying the help-seeking process. Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra and Weintraub (2005) proposed a model illustrating how individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural variables conspire to influence help-seeking.

According to the model, help-seeking is comprised of three parts: recognition, decision, and selection of help. Victims begin the process by appraising a violent encounter or situation and forming their interpretation of the event. If they recognize that the abusive behavior is a problem, then they could move on to the second stage: decision to seek help. In this stage victims once again are evaluating the abusive situation and contingent upon their evaluations they might move on to the following stage: selection of help. The final stage is the selection of an appropriate outlet through which they would like to be helped: family, friends, or formal agency. This process is complicated by its cyclical nature. The three stages form an ongoing cycle where the parts (recognition, decision and selection) continue to inform one another and shape future thoughts and behaviors.

According to Liang, et al., (2005), the help-seeking process is also influenced by three factors: individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural values. All three factors act together to affect each stage of the help-seeking process. For example, Liang, et al., (2005) proposed that in the recognition stage, the victim's individual perceptions of IPV affect the timeframe of when she deems the violence as abusive. Furthermore, the victim's interpersonal contact with the abuser will also influence her ability to recognize

the abuse. Victims that have more shared responsibilities with the abuser, such as co-parenting, might take longer to see the abuse as problematic. Finally, the victim's socioeconomic status and cultural values will also alter her problem recognition (Liang, et al., 2005). Similarly, each of those factors affects the victim's decision to seek help and their selection of help resource.

The individual and interpersonal variables that influence the help-seeking process have been studied extensively. Individual factors related to the help-seeking process include demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, and race (Feldman & Ridley, 1995), employment, presence of children in the home (Tolman & Wang, 2005), substance abuse by the victim and the perpetrator (Feldman & Ridley, 1995; McMurrin, 1999), self-esteem (Hartman, 1987), planning and pursuing goals, academic success, internal locus of control, emotion regulation, perceptions of the self, and learning from past experiences (Suzuki, 2006). Interpersonal variables related to IPV include previous experiences of intimate partner violence, assertiveness, responses to conflict, financial dependence on a partner, and coping skills (Feldman & Ridley, 1995; Lempert, 1997; Huisman, 1996; Krishnan, Hilbert, & VanLeeuwen, 2001).

Liang, et al., (2005) pondered various theoretical reasons why sociocultural factors might influence the help-seeking process. One hypothesis is that women perceive abuse within the context of their social and cultural institutions (Liang, et al., 2005). Some institutions may reinforce power inequalities and see IPV as a private matter rather than a crime. Thus, victims do not see abuse as something wrong or out of the ordinary. This in turn affects their ability to recognize the violence as problematic and decreases

the likelihood that they decide to disclose. For example, if a woman believes in traditional gender roles and keeping her family problems private, then she will be less likely to recognize certain abusive acts as problematic. She will disclose the abuse only when it becomes sufficiently severe and possibly only reach out to private sources of help (i.e., family or friends) (Gondolf, 2004; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, Sullivan, 2005).

However, if one of those variables changed, this will likely affect the rest of the process. For example, if the woman changed her beliefs about the inequality of women to men, she may be more likely to recognize the abuse sooner and seek help.

There are a lot of suggestions about sociocultural variables that influence the help-seeking process. However, research has yet to empirically validate these ideas. In the next section, I will describe the research that exists on ethnicity and help-seeking, and point out gaps in that literature that will be addressed by my study.

### **Recognition and Disclosure in the Context of Culture**

**Recognition of abuse.** Liang et al., (2005) defined recognition as the victim's personal classification of the abuse as problematic, as influenced by the victim's assessment of the abuse severity. Liang, et al., (2005) proposes that both of these components are affected by the victim's cultural values.

Research suggests that the recognition of severe forms of abuse is somewhat unaffected by ethnicity. For example, women of all ethnicities attribute severe physical acts of violence such as hitting, punching, kicking and beating to the category of IPV (Acevedo, 2000). Similarly, they also attribute sexual violence towards an intimate partner to that category as well (Acevedo, 2000). Differences between cultures in the



recognition of abuse begin to emerge when women are faced with more minor forms of physical abuse (i.e., slapping, pushing and shoving) and psychological abuse (Yick, 2000).

For instance, one study on Chinese American immigrants ( $N = 16$  males and 15 females) used face-to-face interviews and open ended questions to measure people's definitions of abuse (Yick, 2000). They found that both men and women did not see psychological abuse as a problem in relationships and supported minor expressions of physical abuse. A study with first generation Korean Americans ( $N=105$  males and 118 females) also revealed that both men and women did not categorize psychological aggression as abusive (Ahn, 2002). A focus group study with a sample of 171 Filipino undergraduate students indicated that participants were more cognizant of physical and sexual aggression than psychological abuse (Agbayani-Siewert & Flanagan, 2001). Another focus group study on Latino immigrants used interviews to gather information about abuse (Lewis, West, Bautista, Greenberg & Done-Perez, 2005). Interviewing a total of 35 immigrants, the study concluded that while the participants in the sample recognized psychologically abusive acts as wrong, they greatly underestimated the impact of those acts and saw them as justifiable in comparison to physically abusive acts. In sum, studies show that ethnic minority groups tend to view psychological and minor physical abuse as different from physical abuse and not as problematic.

In contrast to these findings, there is evidence that policies in Western countries are increasingly likely to cast psychological abuse as a serious problem in intimate relationships. For example, in France in early 2010 parliament unanimously voted to

outlaw psychological violence towards an intimate partner. The offense is punishable by up to three years in prison. In addition, in many western countries, such as the US, Italy, Germany, Austria, Canada and the United Kingdom, stalking is considered a form of psychological abuse and is also against the law. In comparison, similar anti-stalking laws do not exist in non-western countries. In an effort to test differences between ethnic groups, one study measured variations between women who are traditionally seen as Caucasian and ethnic minorities. The study compared 20 American Indian women to 20 Caucasian women on their perceptions of abuse (Tehee & Esqueda, 2008). Using semi-structured interviews, the researchers found that most Native American women only recognized physical violence as abuse, while their Caucasian counterparts also recognized the effects of verbal and emotional abuse as abuse. The authors concluded that those differences could be explained by the distinctions in cultural ideology between the two groups.

In sum, research supports the claim that while severe acts of physical abuse are more unanimously recognized as abuse by people of all ethnicities, different ethnic groups compared to their Western counterparts vary in their view of less severe forms of physical abuse as well as psychological abuse. Thus, there appears to be a connection between ethnicity and the recognition of abuse. In the next section we will review research that suggests the same connection for disclosure of abuse.

**Disclosure of abuse.** Liang et al., (2005) identified two steps in the help-seeking process that follow recognition of abuse: decision to seek help and selection of help resource. The authors defined the decision to seek help as a shift in “women’s cognitive

appraisal of their situation and external circumstance” (p.76). This shift often leads to the selection of a help source where the victim identifies a help provider such as a friend, family member, domestic violence agency, police, or counselor. An assumed final step of this process is that the victim will actually contact the selected help sources and disclose the abuse.

In fact, research on disclosure has focused on this very last step of the process (the act of disclosure), rather than the preceding steps (decision to seek help and selection of help source). Studies on the act of disclosure indicate that while ethnic minority women are overall less likely to disclose abuse, they experience abuse at similar rates to Caucasian women (Andersson, Cockcroft, Ansari, Omer, Chaudhry, Khan & Pearson, 2009).

According to Tjaden and Thoennes (1998), variations in rates of abuse among ethnicities are negligible. They found that in a random sample 51.3% of Caucasian women ( $n=6452$ ) reported physical abuse, compared to 52.1% of African Americans ( $n=780$ ), 49.6% of Asian Americans ( $n=780$ ), 53.2% of Hispanics ( $n=628$ ), 61.4% of American Indians ( $n=88$ ) and 57.7% of Mixed Race women ( $n=397$ ). Ficek (2005) compared prevalence of physical abuse among Caucasian, American Indians and Hispanic women. The author found that 6.3% of Caucasian women ( $n=1253$ ), 7.5 % of Hispanic women ( $n=1555$ ), and 14.6 % of American Indian women ( $n=1036$ ) reported experiencing acts of physical abuse such as pushing, hitting, slapping, and kicking. Other studies compare victimization rates without distinguishing between types of abuse. Instead, they include all forms of abuse: physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. One study

examined differences between African American ( $n=158$ ), Caucasian ( $n=142$ ), and Hispanic American women ( $n=145$ ) (Weston, Temple & Marshall, 2005). The results revealed that 35.5% of African American women, 31.9% of Caucasian women, and 32.6% of Hispanic American women experienced abuse. In a study of 1400 women recruited from emergency rooms (41% Caucasian, 32% Hispanic and 14% other), no significant differences in abuse prevalence were shown (Krishnan, Hilbert, VanLeeuwen, 2001). The study indicated that 31% of Hispanic women, 24% of Caucasian women, and 36% of the “other” category reported a history of abuse. A different study used phone interviews to examine prevalence rates of abuse in Memphis, TN (Seedat, Stein, & Forde, 2005). The study surveyed 619 women with 102 women reporting prior abuse. Of sampled women, 20% of the Caucasian women ( $n = 326$ ), 19% of the African American women ( $n = 282$ ) and 20% of the Hispanic women ( $n = 10$ ) reported abuse. Last, Coker, David, Arias, Desai, Sanderson, Brandt and Smith (2002) conducted a large scale random sample study to assess lifetime victimization rates of IPV. The sample included 5181 Caucasian, 657 African American, 581 Hispanic, 112 Asian, 67 American Indian, and 134 “mixed” race women. The authors found that 29.3% of Caucasian, 33.0% African American, 27.5% Hispanic, 12.8% Asian, 38.2 % American Indian, and 43.5% mixed race women reported being victimized by a spouse over their lifetime.

Even though the findings discussed above show some variations in prevalence rates among ethnic groups, those differences are generally not statistically significant and not consistent. Thus, data suggest that IPV occurs at similar rates for all women, regardless of their ethnicity. Given this evidence, one would expect that research would

also yield similar frequencies of help-seeking for all women. However, research on help-seeking shows that ethnic minority women tend to underutilize formal help services such as counseling and IPV organizations. If they do disclose the abuse, ethnic minority women tend to confide in close family members or friends (West, Kantor, & Jasisnki, 1998; Kaukinen, 2004).

A National Crime Victimization Survey conducted in the US in 2000 revealed that of 1,554 victims of IPV, 699 were Caucasian women, 435 were Hispanic, 202 were African American, 186 were Asian and 32 were Native American. Of those victims, 42% of the Caucasian women sought formal help (i.e., report to police, call IPV agency, seek shelter in IPV organization) compared to 40% of Hispanic women, 9% of African American women, 6% of Asian women and 3% of Native American women. Another study compared help-seeking rates between Hispanic and Caucasian women (West, Kantor, & Jasisnki, 1998). The study used face-to-face interviews to assess help-seeking behaviors in 76 Hispanic and 117 Caucasian victims of IPV. The findings showed that Hispanic women significantly underutilized formal help sources, such as domestic violence agencies, in comparison to Caucasian women. In contrast, Hispanic women were most likely to seek help from a family member or a close friend. Another study compared the help-seeking strategies of Caucasian ( $n = 6452$ ) and ethnic minority women ( $n = 2673$ ) following abusive incidents (Kaukinen, 2004). Caucasian women were overall more likely to engage in help-seeking, such as reporting to police, using social service agencies and mental health professionals. In contrast, ethnic minority women were more likely to withdraw and isolate themselves following abusive incidents. Henning and

Klesges (2002) used a sample 1746 abuse victims (80.7% African American and 19.3% Caucasian) following the arrest of a male partner due to recent abuse. Help-seeking rates showed that only 11.6% of the African American women used counseling services and local IPV agencies compared to almost 29% of Caucasian women. Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel and Baig-Amin (2003) showed that of 62 abuse survivors (African American  $n = 20$ , Hispanic  $n = 22$ , South Asian  $n = 20$ ), 33.3% of African Americans victims, 47.8% of Hispanic victims, and 25% of South Asian victims used the police. In contrast, 44.4% of African American victims, 73.9% of Hispanic victims, and 90% of South Asian victims confided in a friend. Last, a comparison study of African American ( $n = 324$ ) and Caucasian ( $n = 52$ ) battered women recruited from a mid-Atlantic city showed that Caucasian women were more likely to seek help from a mental health counselor while African American women were more likely to rely on prayer as a coping strategy following abuse.

In sum, similar to recognition, the research summarized above shows help-seeking differences exist between ethnic minority groups. Moreover, these differences are not due to lower abuse rates. This suggests that the other parts of the help-seeking process (decision to disclose and selection of source) are possibly related to one's ethnicity. However, none of this research allows us to make generalizable claims about the specific reasons for these differences. This is due to systematic limitations shared by the studies.

**Gaps in research.** There are a number of ways that the research could be extended in order to provide more specific information about how ethnicity affects recognition and disclosure of abuse. Consistent among studies are two methodological

limitations. The first is the use of focus groups. While focus groups are a good place for generating new ideas, they introduce error that limits the validity of the findings. The group format allows people to observe and judge each others' responses and could influence those responses. In the context of cultural diversity, focus groups could be biased by individuals' needs to keep family problems private (Galanti, 2003). This need could influence how truthful people are when presenting information.

The second methodological limitation is the manner in which abuse recognition and disclosure have been studied. Many previous studies ask participants yes/no questions about what they consider abuse. Some studies include abuse categories, such as psychological abuse, sexual abuse and make a distinction between minor vs. severe physical abuse. However, even this overlooks the probability that recognition of abuse is not categorical but falls on a continuum for most people. For example, a victim who was raised in a culture where violence was not condoned may see even less frequent and less severe abuse (i.e., shaming, verbal abuse, and controlling behaviors) as problematic. Another victim raised in a culture where violence is more acceptable would be more likely to tolerate more frequent and severe abuse (i.e., slapping, kicking, and threatening behaviors). Thus, one way to improve research on this topic is to have a more nuanced examination that looks at the point at which victims find abuse problematic and choose to seek help.

The most significant limitation of the research is not only a methodological issue, but also a conceptual one. This limitation is that, so far, researchers have used racial and ethnic groups in order to study differences in abuse recognition and disclosure. This is a

limited way of looking at the issues of recognition and disclosure because race and ethnicity are proxy variables that stand for specific cultural values shared by people. By identifying the underlying values that differ across cultures, researchers would increase their ability to make generalizable predictions and inform practice.

**Summary.** Overall, research on recognition and disclosure of abuse has yielded support to the model proposed by Liang, et al., (2005) by showing that cultural characteristics influence recognition and disclosure of abuse. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the research literature involving which specific cultural values account for this influence. It is more likely that those cultural values, rather than grouping criteria used in most studies (i.e., ethnic status, skin color, etc.), are the root causes of the effect. Scholars have proposed specific values that vary across cultures. Below I will review the theories and research identifying those cultural values.

### **Cultural Values and Their Relationship to IPV Recognition and Disclosure**

**Values that Vary Across Cultures.** In the 1980s, Hofstede pioneered the idea that there are certain values that vary across cultures. Hofstede (1983) conducted a large scale study in which he examined 50 nations (Hofstede, 1983). His approach was to conceptualize culture by summarizing the underlying dimensions that were found across cultures. He then measured how high or low a particular society was on each of those dimensions.

Through a factor analysis, Hofstede arrived at five continuous dimensions of culture: Power Distance Index (the extent to which members of the culture accept egalitarian distribution of power), Individualism (the extent to which people care more



about themselves and their personal interests rather than the collective interest of their families and friends), Masculinity (the extent to which cultures value achievement, bravery, assertiveness, and material wealth for men, and modesty, caring, and interpersonal harmony for women), Uncertainty Avoidance Index (the extent to which people are comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity in a society) and Long Term Orientation (the extent to which people tend to be more liberal and independent, rather than value tradition, social obligations, and protecting one's name). According to Hofstede each culture falls on a continuum along each of these dimensions.

Hofstede's approach added to the literature because he was the first to use the scientific method to study how values cluster within cultures and compare how those values are demonstrated in different societies. Even though this cemented the basis for later work, Hofstede's approach had several limitations. First, he did not examine how the integration of values could uniquely influence social behaviors. Second, he did not apply his theory to individual people, but rather examined societies on a more macro level. Last, Hofstede did not measure how environmental context (i.e., place of business vs. family relationships, etc) could augment one's cultural values and practices.

Harry Triandis was the first person to address these limitations. He began by arguing that egalitarianism and individualism often work together in an integrative fashion to influence social order and behaviors. He proposed a model in which a society could fall on a continuum along two axes: egalitarianism and individualism. Thus, a society could find itself in one of four quadrants: a society could be high on egalitarianism and high on individualism; high on egalitarianism and low on

individualism; low on egalitarianism and high on individualism; or low on egalitarianism and low on individualism (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995). Triandis no longer thought of egalitarianism and individualism as completely orthogonal constructs, but rather focused on the ways by which societies exhibiting to a degree both of those values differ. This allowed Triandis to measure not only specific values, but also their interactions and the effects of these interactions on social values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Triandis then applied the egalitarianism and individualism dimensions to individuals. That is, each individual has his or her own values with regard to egalitarianism and individualism. Because each individual develops in a cultural context, these values are influenced by the values of the culture as a whole (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995). For this reason, in this paper I take the term cultural values to mean individual values that are culturally inspired.

Finally, Triandis allowed that cultural values could vary based on situational context. For example, someone could be very egalitarian and individualistic regarding employment but very non-egalitarian and collectivist in matters of the family. In their place of business this person could be a proponent of treating women as equals. At home the same person could assert that women should be the caretakers in the family and emphasize family connectedness (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995).

In sum, Hofstede changed the way researchers thought about culture by introducing cultural dimensions. However, Hofstede found these dimensions via statistical analyses due to the exploratory nature of his work. Triandis developed a unique theoretical framework based on two of Hofstede's dimensions, Power Distance and

Individualism. He referred to these as egalitarianism and individualism and argued that they cooperate to influence cultures and people. He further asserted that cultural values are context-specific and can vary by individual. This approach remains useful in research today.

**Egalitarianism and individualism in the western world and beyond.** As illustrated above, researchers have focused on different cultural values and examined their prevalence among various cultures and individuals. Others following in their footsteps have investigated cultural trends both in the United States and outside the United States. In order to fully understand how individualism and egalitarianism might affect people's perceptions and disclosure of abusive acts, I will take a closer look at how those cultural values manifest themselves in the US and the rest of the world.

*Anglo-Saxon cultural values in the United States.* In the year 2000, the Census found that about 75% of people in the US identified themselves as "White." This could be consequent to the historic fact that the largest populations of immigrants in the US have come predominantly from Germany, Ireland, and Great Britain (Adams & Strother-Adams, 2001). Consequently, these immigrants' cultural beliefs were the first major influence on the American culture and are still upheld in most communities in the US (Adams & Strother-Adams, 2001; Kohls, 1984). These values often focus on individual well-being rather than the community (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Kohls, 1984, Tyler, Dillihunt, Boykin, Coleman, Scott, Tyler, & Hurley, 2008; Spindler and Spindler, 1983), material possessions rather than spirituality (Tyler, et, al., 2008; Kohls, 1984), competition rather than cooperation, and equality rather than social rank or

status (Kohls, 1984). From these more general values, individualism and later egalitarianism are often seen as the consummation of the Anglo-Saxon culture.

*Egalitarianism.* During the 20<sup>th</sup> century women's roles at home and at the work place began to change. In the 1980s and 1990s researchers took particular interest in this shift (McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Beere, King, Beere & King, 1984; King & King, 1993). Subsequently, the media also raised questions about family values, family dynamics and the role of women both outside and inside the home (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Books such as Faludi's *Backlash: The undeclared war against American women* were gaining popularity and were identifying trends of gender inequality. Consequently, the need for research to examine the questions of gender equality empirically became more and more evident (King & King, 1997; McHugh & Frieze, 1997).

In order to understand the implications of egalitarian beliefs, researchers have studied these beliefs in more depth. For instance, Beere, King, Beere & King (1984) found that there are significant differences between men and women; for instance women score slightly higher on egalitarianism. Similarly, in subgroups of different ages it was shown that young adults scored higher than senior citizens on general egalitarian beliefs (Beere, et al., 1984), indicating that there might be a generational component of egalitarianism. Another area where girls and women still maintain more egalitarian beliefs than men is in regards to work-family balance (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Davis and Greenstein 2004; Fan and Marini 2000). Even though this is still true, men have been shown to seek partners who are educated, maintain financial independence, and maintain a balance between work and family (Davis & Pearce, 2007; Rhea & Otto,

2001). In terms of egalitarian beliefs and education, studies from 2000 and 2001 have shown that families are becoming more and more egalitarian and are socializing their children to also be egalitarian (Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Rhea & Otto, 2001). Furthermore, those children who have been socialized to be more egalitarian regarding education will continue to hold those beliefs long term (Davis & Pearce, 2007).

In summary, it appears that egalitarianism has received great attention in the Anglo-Saxon culture. Even though slight differences might exist between men and women, as well as between older and younger generations, the trend is that the US society is moving towards more and more egalitarian values both inside and outside of the home.

*Individualism.* Different from egalitarianism, individualism has always been a central component of Anglo-Saxon cultural values (Kohls, 1984; Miller, 2002). People have proposed that individualism has been present in the Western world since the Renaissance (Kohls, 1994) and has been adopted in the US in many areas of everyday life. Specifically, the emphasis on individual privacy, freedom of the individual to pursue his/her aspirations, and self-reliance have been key parts of individualism in the US (Hofstede, 1980, Kohls, 1984).

As individualistic as the US culture has been considered, a lot of variability still exists within it. Oyserman, Coon and Kimmelmeier (2002) published a comprehensive meta-analysis critically evaluating individualism and collectivism studies across countries in the world. The meta-analyses included 83 studies conducted between 1982 and 2000. The authors found a lot of variability within the US: for example, some individuals felt

similar obligations to family and friends as people in more collectivist countries do (Oyserman, et al., 2002; Sorensen & Oyserman, 2010). However, people in the US tend to have more individualistic values when it comes to broader social relationships. For instance, people are more likely to make new friends outside of their immediate social group or family, be more assertive with each other, and pursue their own individual goals.

In summary, it appears that individualism has been a central topic of research studies in the US for a long time. Even though variability exists within the US culture, studies suggest that there might still be differences in how individualistic people relate to one another, their communication styles, and their pursuit of individual aspirations.

*Deviations from Anglo-Saxon values.* It would be very challenging to attempt to summarize all cultural values that exist outside the more traditional Anglo-Saxon culture because they differ greatly based on countries, regions and communities. However, certain trends have been observed in more Eastern philosophies and practices. Those cultural trends are emphasis on community wellbeing rather than the individual (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Galanti, 2003), family cohesion and family privacy (Malley-Morrison, 2004; Bui, & Morash, 1999), as well as compliance with traditional gender roles both outside and inside the family (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Galanti, 2003; Yick and Agbayani-Siewert, 1997). From these, more general value trends about non-egalitarian gender role expectations and collectivism emerge.

*Non-egalitarianism.* In many cultures, people have maintained expectations concerning gender roles and behaviors that might differ from the more traditional Anglo-

Saxon values described above. These values often center around certain ideas about the role of the woman as a home keeper and about the relationship between husbands and wives. For example, in many Latin cultures husbands are seen as the superior, and a wife's duty is to obey her husband (Galanti, 2003). This dynamic is taught from a very early age, where boys are socialized to be dominant and strong, while girls are socialized to be submissive (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Similar patterns have been observed in the Arab culture as well. There the husband is considered to be head of the household, and the wife is expected to obey his rules and honor his requests (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Similarly, in the East Asian culture, a family is viewed as a hierarchical structure, where the husband is the figure of authority and the wife takes a secondary and submissive role to him (Xu, Campbell, & Zhu, 2001). This structure extends to a woman's entire life. Prior to marriage, the girl is expected to obey her father, after marriage to obey her husband and after the death of her husband she is to obey her son (Xu et al., 2001).

In summary, some deviations from the traditional Anglo-Saxon culture seem to exist in other cultures, specifically around family structure and gender role expectations. The emphasis in some cultures is more on the hierarchical family structure and women maintaining a secondary and submissive role to men. This is in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon culture, where men and women are often seen as equal and men often seek women whom they see as equal both inside and outside the home.

*Collectivism.* In most cultures there is an emphasis on the well-being of the family as a whole, including extended family and the community (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Individuals are encouraged to make choices that would benefit their family and

community, even if those choices might not directly benefit them as individuals (Galanti, 2003, Haj-Yahia, 2000). Two concepts describing this phenomenon come from Latin cultures. Galanti (2003) explained that in many Latin families, decisions are made within the family and the concept of familismo (where emphasis is strictly placed on the family) is preferred over personalismo (where emphasis is placed on the individual). Similarly in the East Asian culture, there is an emphasis on harmonious interpersonal relationships and interdependence (Yoshioka & Dang, 2000). Distinct from many Western cultures in which individualism is supported, in Asian cultures individual needs are not seen as being of primary importance. Instead, the interests of the family are usually considered before the interests of the individual (Yick, 1999). For instance, the issue of divorce, while accepted in Western culture, is stigmatized in the Asian culture (Weil, & Lee, 2004). Accordingly, family disagreements are handled within the family. Outside interventions to family disputes are generally deterred in fear that they will bring shame to the family (Yoshioka & Dang, 2000). Consequently, emotional problems are generally kept within the family as well (Yoshioka & Dang, 2000).

In summary, collectivist values are a big part of many cultures. Specifically, the emphasis on family well-being, privacy of problems, and decisions making for the common good rather than the individual are some of the key markers of collectivism in many areas in the world. In the next section I will examine how these cultural values might be related to IPV recognition and disclosure.

**Relevance of Cultural Values to IPV Recognition and Disclosure.** Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008) proposed that IPV is one of the contexts in which egalitarianism and



individualism affect people from all cultures. They argued that in a non-egalitarian society women would be more reluctant to report abuse. First, women are likely to have internalized the belief that abuse is to be tolerated because women are not equal to men. Second, even if women decide that the abuse has reached a point where it is not tolerable, they may not expect others to agree and to offer assistance. Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008) also argued that victims of abuse in societies that are low on individualism may be reluctant to share their experiences with people outside of the home because of the emphasis on family connectedness and privacy of family problems (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008).

The present study seeks to empirically test the argument put forth by Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008). If this argument is correct, I would expect certain measurable aspects of egalitarianism and individualism to be related to recognition and disclosure of abuse on an individual basis. Additionally, I would expect to find an interaction between egalitarianism and individualism, where high egalitarianism would weaken the relationship between individualism and recognition and disclosure of abuse. Below, I discuss in more detail the specific variables that I will study.

***Egalitarianism and IPV Recognition and Disclosure.*** Egalitarianism is a variable that manifests itself in several domains. Beere, King, Beere and King (1984) argued that those domains are: marital roles (beliefs about equality of the husband and wife in the family context), parental roles (beliefs about equality of the husband and wife as parents), employment roles (beliefs about equality of men and women in the work place), social roles (beliefs about equality of men and women in social relationships) and educational

roles (beliefs about equality of men and women in school settings). I propose that the marital and social roles domains are directly related to IPV. For the remainder of this paper, the term egalitarianism will refer specifically to these domains.

In the context of IPV, non-egalitarian beliefs about marital and social roles could lead to patriarchal beliefs. Patriarchy is defined as an ideology that justifies and defends institutionalized male dominance over women (MacKinnon, 1983). In cultures where low egalitarian values are embedded in the social world, women are encouraged to be submissive (Tang, 2000), maintain family harmony and obey their husbands (Galanti, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Ahmad, Riaz, Barata & Stewart, 2004). Manifested in abusive relationships, this combination of non-egalitarian values within a patriarchal social structure could make it tougher for women to disrupt abusive cycles.

In such cultures, it is also more acceptable for men to be violent towards their wives for various reasons such as sexual infidelity, insulting the husband in front of his friends, challenging the husband's manhood, disobeying the husband, failing to meet the husband's expectations, refusing to have sex with the husband, disrespecting the husband's parents and relatives, and reminding the husband of his weak points (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996). Thus, violence tends to be normalized and condoned.

Given that women have varying expectations about women's behaviors in relationships, it is conceivable that women would have different views of and tolerance for abuse. Hay-Yahia and Sadan (2008) suggested that in egalitarian societies, there is a stronger emphasis on feminist ideas and the empowerment of women. Due to this,

women are more likely to internalize the message that violence is not acceptable. Thus, in those societies women may be better able to recognize a behavior as abusive early on and seek appropriate help. In contrast, women whose cultural values are low in egalitarianism could have a higher tolerance for abuse and greater timeframe for seeking help. In this paper I will examine how egalitarian beliefs affect women's recognition and disclosure of abuse.

*Individualism and IPV Recognition and Disclosure.* Similar to egalitarianism, individualism also manifests itself in several ways. Individualistic values have been thought to emphasize personal autonomy, self-fulfillment and freedom of choice (Hofstede, 1980). Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008) considered how those individualistic values could be related to IPV. In the context of IPV, they suggested that familialism (i.e., emphasis on family harmony and connectedness) and privacy of family problems (i.e., importance of keeping problems within the family) are aspects of individualism related to tolerance of abuse and timeframe of disclosure.

*Familialism and IPV recognition and disclosure.* According to many cultures, the family is seen as a sacred entity (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008). Where familialism is seen as important, there is a concern for preserving and strengthening family relationships (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008). This may cause members of such a culture to downplay the importance of abuse, which may be seen as an individual problem. Abuse might be recognized as problematic only after it disrupts the family unit as a whole. Furthermore, even if members of that culture recognize the abuse as a problem, they may not see it as important enough to disclose.

The effects of familialism may be exaggerated by low egalitarianism. In less egalitarian cultures, the emphasis on maintaining family harmony is placed on the woman (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008). Thus, the woman will be even less likely to see her own problems as important in comparison to other problems. Additionally, even if the woman recognized abuse as problematic, her role as a maintainer of family harmony may prevent her from disclosure.

*Privacy of family problems and IPV recognition and disclosure.* Strong convictions about keeping family problems private require that all issues that arise within families are to be resolved strictly within the family unit (Malley-Morrison, 2004; Bui, & Morash, 1999). Thus, women may choose not to disclose incidents of abuse in order to keep their family name untainted (Gaines, et al., 1997). Relatedly, even when they do disclose, help is more often sought within the family than from formal agencies (Haj-Yahia, 1995). This could be extended to help-seeking suggesting that women who believe in keeping family problems private will be less likely to seek formal help.

**Summary.** Egalitarianism entails perceptions of gender roles in marriage and society as being equal. Less egalitarian beliefs are related to patriarchal values and more acceptance of violence towards women. Thus, women from those societies may not identify abuse as an important problem. Those women are also less likely to disclose abuse. On the other hand, individualism emphasizes personal freedoms. Thus, more individualist beliefs might entail seeing abuse as an individual problem for the victim. Women who are lower on individualism might be encouraged to keep IPV incidents either completely to themselves or share them only with close family members. Thus,

family privacy could be related to higher tolerance towards abusive incidents and less disclosure. Women are also seen as responsible for keeping the family harmony, making it less likely that they will disclose abuse. Egalitarianism and familialism may interact with each other making it even less likely that women will recognize early abuse as problematic and will disclose.

### **Current Study**

The current study examines how specific cultural values are related to tolerance of abuse and timeframe to disclosure of abuse. Drawing from Hofstede and Triandis, this study will examine how individuals' views about social and marital egalitarianism values, level of familialism beliefs, and degree of belief in privacy of family problems are related to tolerance of abuse and timeframe for disclosure. I am going to test the following hypotheses:

#### **Hypotheses.**

1. The more likely one is to keep his or her family problems private, the later their first disclosure is.
2. The higher the egalitarian beliefs the lower the tolerance for abuse.
3. The higher the egalitarian beliefs the earlier disclosure of abuse.
4. The higher the familialism the higher the tolerance for abuse.
5. The higher the familialism the later disclosure of abuse.
6. The higher the egalitarian beliefs the earlier recognition of abuse as problematic, which in turn will be related to earlier disclosure.
7. The relationship between familialism and tolerance for abuse will be weaker for

those high on egalitarianism.

8. The relationship between familialism and disclosure will be weaker for those high on egalitarianism.

## METHOD

### **Procedure**

Participants in this study ( $n = 203$ ) were recruited through three different international offices. Some participants were recruited from Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) at George Mason University ( $n = 100$ ), others from the international office at the University of Maryland, College Park ( $n = 79$ ) and finally from the international office at Georgetown University ( $n = 24$ ). The student investigator was in contact with the international advisors of each of the offices, who gave permission to recruit using the office. The office sent out an email to all international students that included a brief description of the study. A link to the online survey was included in the email.

After recruitment, all participants were directed to the online informed consent. After participants signed the informed consent form, they were automatically redirected to a different page, where they completed the measures. This ensured that their data was kept confidential and was not linked to their name. At the end, students were given information about what is considered IPV in the United States, and several referrals in case they experienced distress during or after the study. Finally, participants were notified that there would be a drawing that they may enter to win prizes in compensation for their time.

## Sample Description

The sample consisted of 203 international students (79 male, 124 female) from three universities in the Washington, DC area (100 George Mason University, 79 University of Maryland, College Park, 24 Georgetown University). There were no requirements regarding ethnicity; in fact, the sample included a wide range of ethnicities so as to reflect a range of different cultural values. Using a one-way ANOVA, descriptive statistics were compared between universities. There were no differences by site for age, years in the US, occupation, marital status, and ethnicity. The only significant difference between the three samples was on the income variable ( $F(2, 202) = 4.04, p < .05$ ). A post-hoc analysis showed that the sample from University of Maryland had a significantly higher average income ( $M = 19653.68$ ) than the samples from the other universities (GMU,  $M = 13994.17$ ; Georgetown,  $M = 9750.00$ ).

The sample was very diverse (13.8% White, 3.4% African Descent, 1% Hispanic, 3.9% Latino, 3.9% Asian American, .5% Pacific Islander, 2.5% Arab, 1.5% Eastern European, 2.5% Middle Eastern, 35% South Asian, 1.5% Multiracial, and 30.5% self-identified as 'other'). Participants came from 57 different countries and varied on the amount of time they had spent in the US, from one week to 23 years ( $M = 3.3, SD = 3.52$ ). Participants ranged from 18 to 71 years of age ( $M = 25.50, SD = 5.29$ ). Most of the participants were graduate students (70.4%), the rest were undergraduate (23.6%) and 'other' (6%). The sample also varied in marital status (15% married, 77% single, .5% separated/divorced, and 7.5% were cohabitating) their occupation (88% students, 2% unemployed, .5% manual work, 2% skilled work, 6% professional, .5% self-employed,



.5% clerical and .5% semi-professional) and their income (range \$0 to \$100,000, *Median* = 12000.00, *M* = \$15694.87, *SD* = 17406.67). See Table 1.

## **Measures**

**Demographic variables.** The study collected data on participants' year in school, age, marital status, years of residency in the US, first language, occupation, income, level of education and ethnicity.

**Attitudes towards violence against women.** The study used a slightly modified Attitudes Towards Wife Abuse Scale (Briere, 1987) to examine participants' attitudes towards violence against women. The measure consists of eight items, measuring attitudes towards wife abuse (see Appendix A for copies of all measures to be used in this study). The scale was chosen because of the ways in which the questions are asked and its adaptability to a college sample. The scale had moderate internal consistency (alpha ranges .63). In this study, the scale had good internal consistency (alpha = .76) (Briere, 1987). Participants rated their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a seven point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The final score was comprised of the mean of the responses.

**Privacy of problems.** The study measured privacy of problems using an adapted version of the Depression Self-Stigma Scale (Kanter, Rusch, & Brondino, 2008). I used a sub-scale measuring secrecy of problem that was related to hiding one's depression from others. The original version of this sub-scale had good validity and reliability (alpha=.80). I adapted the items to create a privacy of relationship problems measure that assessed both individual privacy (i.e., the degree to which a person keeps their

relationship problems private) and family privacy (i.e., how private should one's family keep a family members relationship problems). Participants were asked to imagine a serious relationship problem that would cause them distress and occupy their mind. Then they were given a set of statements about privacy and asked to rate how well statement describes them. After, the participants were asked how they thought their family should behave if they shared the same problem with them. All responses were given on a five point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The final score for each type of privacy was the mean of the responses for the subscale. Internal consistency for both scales was good (privacy of self  $\alpha=.66$ ; privacy of family  $\alpha = .89$ ).

**Familialism.** This concept was measured by using the Familialism Scale developed by Gaines, Marelich, Bledsoe, Steers, Henderson, Granrose, et al. (1997). The scale examines the extent to which family is important to individuals, how connected the individual is to family and how family has affected the individual. The scale is found to correlate highly with other measures of collectivism, has good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ), and has been used with graduate students and community samples comprised of different ethnic minorities (Gaines, et. al., 1997). Participants marked their agreement or disagreement with statements on a five point Likert scale, that ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The final score was comprised of the mean of the responses (current study  $\alpha = .91$ ).

**Egalitarianism.** The study measured egalitarianism by using The Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES), an instrument designed to assess attitudes toward the

equality of men and women (King & King, 1993). The measure was comprised of 95 statements that examined beliefs about gender-based stereotyping and was normed in various samples of college students. The scale contains five subscales measuring attitudes about Educational Roles, Employment Roles, Marital Roles, Parental Roles and Social-Interpersonal-Heterosexual Roles. For the purposes of this study I used the short-form egalitarianism scale, which was comprised of 25 questions about egalitarian beliefs and had good internal consistency (alpha = .93). The SRES uses a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” where higher scores mean higher egalitarianism. A final score was computed, comprised of the mean of the responses for short scale (current study alpha = .93).

**Acculturation.** For exploratory purposes the study also measured acculturation in order to further describe within-group differences. Acculturation is defined as “changes in values and behaviors that individuals make as they gradually adopt the cultural values of the dominant society” (Graves, 1967). I focused on the process of adapting to another culture and examining how individuals vary in their reactions (Sam & Berry, 2010). In order to do this, the study used the Asian Values scale (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999) to assess participants’ acculturation levels. The measure consists of 24 items, measuring six areas of acculturation. Those areas are conformity to norms, family recognition through achievement, emotional self-control, collectivism, humility and respect for parents. The scale was chosen because of its universal use in various samples, including non-Asian and college samples. The scale also had high internal consistency (alpha ranges from .81 to .82) (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Participants rated their agreement or

disagreement with each statement on a four point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The final score was comprised of the mean of the responses (current study  $\alpha=.76$ ).

**Tolerance of abuse.** The study assessed this construct using 7 scenarios that described a progression of a college relationship through the first seven months. The first four scenarios described more ambiguously abusive acts, such as jealousy, name calling, and controlling behaviors with each scenario including more and more abusive behaviors directed toward the female. The later scenarios included minor to more severe physical abuse with the last scenario describing a major incident of physical abuse (hitting and kicking). Following each scenario participants were asked four questions. The first question measured how normal participants view the described relationship (ranging from 1=not similar to 5=very similar). The second question assessed how problematic participants viewed the described relationship (ranging from 1 = no problems to 5 = serious problems). By asking each of those questions, I gathered information about when the described relationship deviated from other relationships known to participants and when they recognized the abuse as problematic. For exploratory purposes, participants were also asked the extent to which they viewed each partner's behavior as problematic (ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely). Finally, participants were asked to share additional thoughts in a qualitative way. The mean of responses on question two was computed across scenarios, arriving at a final score, where those who scored high on his variable are likely to identify problems in the relationship earlier.

**Timeframe for disclosure.** At the end of the last scenario participants were asked: “If this was a relationship you were in, at what point would you talk with someone about what was happening in the relationship”. Then the participants were given the option to talk to a close friend, family member or a professional. The response choices for each option ranged from “never” to “month 7”. The first two options (i.e., close friend and family member) were used for exploratory purposes. The third option (i.e., professional) informed us about the likelihood that participants would seek formal help and at which point they would consider formal help. Additionally, participants were given various options of the type of formal help they are most likely to turn to. Those choices were “a) religious leader”, “b) therapist”, “c) counselor”, “d) doctor”, “e) hotline”, or “f) other”. Those responses were used to explore differences in formal help-seeking.

## RESULTS

### **Sample descriptives**

On average participants were quite egalitarian, scoring near the top of the scale ( $M = 4.18, SD = .56$ ), prioritized wellbeing of their family ( $M = 3.90, SD = .79$ ) and valued privacy of their family problems ( $M = 3.38, SD = .75$ ). Participants were on average less tolerant of abuse, scoring towards the top of the scale ( $M = 4.15, SD = .53$ ) and were likely to disclose incidents of abuse around month three ( $M = 3.52, SD = 1.43$ ). Examining disclosure further, participants were likely to talk to a friend earliest ( $M = 3.44, SD = 1.3$ ), then to a family member ( $M = 4.00, SD = 2.07$ ) and latest to a professional ( $M = 5.03, SD = 2.27$ ). For exploratory purposes I also examined level of acculturation. Results revealed that the sample was low on acculturation, scoring towards the bottom of the scale ( $M = 2.38, SD = .28$ ). See Table 2.

### **Demographic variables**

Prior to testing the study hypotheses, the researcher examined the relationships between the demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, income, years in the US, year in school, occupation, and relationship status) and the rest of the study variables (i.e., acculturation, egalitarianism, familialism, privacy of family problems, privacy of own problems, attitudes towards violence against women, first disclosure, total abuse

tolerance, tolerance of psychological abuse and tolerance of physical abuse). The analyses showed a few significant relationships, which I will describe below.

First, gender was significantly related to egalitarianism ( $r = -.34, p < .01$ ), familialism ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ), privacy of own problems ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ), attitudes violence against women ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ), first disclosure ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ), tolerance of total abuse ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ), tolerance of psychological abuse ( $r = -.27, p < .01$ ) and tolerance of physical abuse ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ). This showed that men were more likely to be private about their problems, have more favorable attitudes towards violence against women, and disclose abuse later. On the other hand women were higher on egalitarian and familial values and overall less tolerant of abuse, both psychological and physical.

Second, number of years one spent in the United States was significantly related to egalitarianism ( $r = .21, p < .05$ ), attitudes towards violence against women ( $r = -.24, p < .01$ ), tolerance of total abuse ( $r = .18, p < .05$ ), tolerance of psychological abuse ( $r = .15, p < .05$ ), and tolerance of physical abuse ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ). This showed that the longer people were in the US, the more egalitarian and less accepting of violence against women they were. In addition, the longer people were in the US, the less tolerant they were of both psychological and physical abuse.

### **Bivariate relationships**

To cross check validity, participants' scores on the Attitudes Towards Wife Abuse scale were correlated with their tolerance of abuse. There was a strong negative correlation between the two measures, indicating that the more accepting people were of wife abuse, the higher their tolerance of abuse was ( $r = -.43, p < .001$ ).

To investigate whether the more likely people are to keep their family problems private, the later their first disclosure (Hypothesis #1), I examined the bivariate correlations. The analysis revealed a non-significant relationship between privacy of family problems and time to first disclosure total ( $r = .12, p = .08$ ) or first disclosure to a professional ( $r = -.06; p = .39$ ). However, an analysis of privacy of one's own problems and first disclosure yielded a significant positive relationship ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ), showing that the more private one is about his or her own problems, the later he or she would disclose instances of abuse (see Table 3).

The second and third hypotheses examined whether people who are more egalitarian will have lower tolerance for abuse and will disclose instances of abuse sooner. Analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between egalitarianism and concern about abuse ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ) and a significant negative relationship between egalitarianism and first disclosure ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ). These results indicate that the more egalitarian one is the less tolerant of abuse they are and the sooner they would disclose instances of abuse. In order to study abuse in a more nuanced way I also examined tolerance of physical and psychological abuse separately. The correlational analyses revealed that both tolerance for psychological abuse and tolerance for physical abuse were significantly related to egalitarianism ( $r = .35, p < .001$  and  $r = .43, p < .001$ , respectively).

The fourth and fifth hypotheses deal with the relationship of familialism with tolerance for abuse and timing of disclosure of abuse. Analyses revealed a non-significant relationship between familialism and tolerance of abuse ( $r = .13, p = .07$ ), as well as a



non-significant relationship between familialism and first disclosure ( $r = -.05, p = .45$ ). When abuse was split into physical and psychological abuse, there was a non-significant relationship between familialism and tolerance for psychological abuse ( $r = .05, p = .52$ ), but a significant positive relationship between familialism and concern about physical abuse ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ). This shows that the higher one is on familial values, the less tolerant they are of physical abuse.

For exploratory purposes I also examined the covariance between acculturation and tolerance and disclosure of abuse. The results showed that acculturation was significantly related to concern for abuse ( $r = -.18, p < .01$ ), tolerance of physical abuse ( $r = -.196, p < .01$ ) and tolerance of psychological abuse ( $r = -.18, p < .01$ ). This indicates that the more acculturated people were the less concerned they were for both physical and psychological abuse. Acculturation was not significantly related to first disclosure ( $r = .10, p = .16$ ). (See Table 3).

### **Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM)**

**Analysis plan.** So far, I have examined the covariance between the predictors and the outcome variables. In this section, I will use an HLM model (Kivlighan & Shaughnessy, 1995) to study change over “time” both within and between individuals. The “time” variable in this study is the corresponding level of abuse severity. First, I will model the data graphically in order to observe the changes in responses within individual. Then, I will use a one line regression to fit the changes in growth of concern over “time”. In order to determine if a linear model is a good representation of the data, I will use a  $chi^2$  goodness-of-fit test. If this one-line model is not a good fit for the data, I will use a

piecewise model, which will utilize two lines to model the changes in concern over “time” (Singer, 1998; Gallop, Dimidjian, Atkins & Muggeo, 2011). These two lines will examine changes in psychological abuse (months 1-4) and changes in physical abuse (months 5-7) separately. Again, I will use a  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit test to determine if the piecewise model is a good way to represent the data.

If a two-part model fits the data better, I will perform two HLM models, one for psychological abuse and one for physical abuse. In the first step of each model, I will examine within-individual differences, by looking at the within-person growth in concern as the level of abuse increases across the scenarios. In the second step of each model, I will examine how the predictors (i.e., egalitarianism and familialism) help explain the changes in concern. I will use a mock “time” variable, which assumed the responses on scenarios 1-7 simulate real responses to increase in abuse in a real relationship.

### **Analyses.**

**Modeling the data.** First, I plotted the data in order to graphically explore the change of concern over severity of abuse. (See Figure 1). In the figure I plotted the frequencies of individuals’ responses about how problematic they found the abuse in the corresponding scenario. If one looks at scenario 1 (this corresponds to month 1 in the figure), one will see that most people found none to minor problems in the described relationship, and almost no one found serious problems. This trend begins to shift with scenario 2, where more people are seeing minor to serious problems emerging. As one moves through the scenarios one can see that more people seem to find serious problems in the relationship. Overall, in months 1-4, there is a lot of variability in the answers, with

many people seeing minor to serious problems. At month 5, there was an increase in how problematic people saw the described abuse. This month was the first instance of physical abuse. For months 5-7 people's concern generally remained consistently high compared to months 1-4. (See Figure 1.)

After I modeled participants' responses on how problematic they found the abuse, I then examined how these responses changed over "time" as the level of abuse increased. In order to represent the average growth of concern over abuse severity, a linear regression line was fit through the data. A  $\chi^2$  test of goodness-of-fit test ( $\chi^2 = 1643.94$ ,  $df = 1418$   $p < .001$ ) indicates that this line was not a good fit for the data, signifying that a single regression line would not be the best way to capture the changes in concern on the individual level.

In order to better represent the data I examined a piecewise model, which tested growth of concern about psychological abuse (months 1-4) and physical abuse (months 5-7) separately. A  $\chi^2$  test of goodness-of-fit indicated that using two lines was an accurate way to represent the data ( $\chi^2 = 1455.2$ ,  $df = 1416$   $p = .48$ ). Thus, I used this piecewise function to test both within and between individual differences for psychological and physical abuse separately. Figure 1 shows a graphical display of both the single line and the two-line functions. The figure demonstrates the spread in the participants' responses for each scenario. This is shown using the inter-quartile ranges of the answers for each scenario. Then, the figure illustrates both the one-line and the two-line functions as they fit the data. The graph reveals how much more accurate the two-line functions show the average growth of concern over mock "time" (See Figure 2.)

**Predicting change.** Using a piecewise HLM model, I first examined growth of concern for psychological abuse (months 1-4). At level one, the fixed-effects model, showed that people's concern grew in a linear manner as psychological abuse escalated ( $F = 409.12, p < .001$ ). At level two, we examined between-people differences by looking at how egalitarian and familial values explain the growth of concern over abuse severity. Significant differences were found in the slopes for egalitarianism but not for familialism, showing that the more egalitarian people were, they quicker they became concerned with psychological abuse ( $F = 12.02, p < .01$ ). (See Figure 3). No significant differences were found between people's intercepts (i.e., their answers to the first scenario and their egalitarian or familial beliefs) (See Table 4).

Using a piecewise HLM model, I then examined growth of concern for physical abuse (months 5-7). At level one, the fixed-effects model, showed that people's concern grew at a rate less than .05 points of concern per question, which is practically equivalent to no growth. Thus, people's concern did not change meaningfully as level of physical abuse escalated ( $F = 3.97, p = .05$ ) (See Figure 1). At level two, we examined between-people differences by looking at how egalitarian and familial values might be related to concern for physical abuse. Significant differences were found in between the intercepts for egalitarianism, but not for familialism, showing that the more egalitarian people were, the more likely they were to be more concerned at the first instance of minor physical abuse ( $F = 18.26, p < .01$ ). (See Table 4). No significant differences were found between people's slopes, showing that people generally thought physical abuse was problematic, regardless their egalitarian or familial values. (See Figure 4).

### **Mediational analysis**

To test the sixth hypothesis (i.e., tolerance of abuse will partially mediate the relationship between egalitarianism and first disclosure), a mediational analysis was performed using the guidelines set forth by Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004). The first step confirmed a significant relationship between the predictor in the model (egalitarianism) and the outcome (first disclosure), such that egalitarianism was negatively related to first disclosure (Table 5). Thus, the more egalitarian one was the sooner they were likely to disclose abuse. The second step tested the relationship between the predictor (egalitarianism) and the proposed mediator (tolerance of abuse) in order to establish a link between these two variables. We found a positive relationship between egalitarianism and concern about abuse, showing that the more egalitarian one was the lower their tolerance of abuse was. Finally, the third step was to test the significance of the relationship between the mediator (tolerance of abuse) and the outcome (first disclosure) and estimate the relationship between the predictor and outcome, while controlling for the mediator. The results showed that after controlling for the effects of tolerance of abuse, the significant relationship between egalitarianism and first disclosure disappeared. Thus, tolerance of abuse mediated the relationship between egalitarianism and first disclosure (Sobel test = -2.23;  $p < .05$ ). (See Table 5.)

### **Moderational analysis**

To test the final two hypotheses (i.e., egalitarianism will moderate the relationships between familialism and tolerance of abuse as well as familialism and first disclosure), I followed steps recommended by Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004). All the

predictors were centered in order to decrease the effects of multicollinearity then a product term between egalitarianism and familialism was created. Using a hierarchical regression, I included the two predictor variables in the first step and the interaction term in the second step. There was a significant main effect ( $F = 18.52, p < .05$ ), showing that there was a significant positive relationship between egalitarianism and tolerance of abuse. However, results showed that the relationship between familialism and tolerance of abuse did not depend on egalitarianism ( $F$  change =  $.79, p = .34$ ).

When examining time to first disclosure there was a negative main effect for egalitarianism but not for familialism. This, however, is qualified by the fact that egalitarianism moderated the relationship between familialism and first disclosure ( $F$  change =  $7.55, p < .01$ ). (See Table 6). The interaction effects were modeled according to Aiken and West (1994). Although overall there was no main effect for familialism, for participants with low egalitarian values, there was a significant negative relationship between familialism and first disclosure. In other words, for people with low egalitarian values, stronger familialism predicted earlier disclosure (See Figure 5). This finding was opposite to what was hypothesized and will be further discussed in the discussion section.

## DISCUSSION

### **Description of sample and synthesis**

This study used a diverse sample comprised of 203 international students from 57 different countries. The participants were recruited from three universities in the Washington, DC area and were primarily graduate students. Students varied in age, income, marital status, occupation, and number of years they had spent in the US. In general, the sample was egalitarian, valued the wellbeing of the family, and was low on acculturation. Participants showed on average low tolerance of abuse and were likely to disclose abuse around month three in the scenarios constructed for the study, when the boyfriend displayed first signs of being overly possessive. Similar to previous studies, I examined how people from different cultural backgrounds might perceive abuse and assessed their reported help-seeking tendencies (Ahn, 2002; Yick, 2000; West, Kantor, & Jasisnki, 1998; Kaukinen, 2004; Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel & Baig-Amin, 2003). However, this study added to the previous research by examining cultural values, rather than studying specific cultural groups. Using a diverse sample allowed for a more easily generalized exploration of how one's culture impacts perceptions of abuse and help-seeking.

### **Description of results and synthesis**

#### **Recognition and disclosure of abuse.**

*Recognition of abuse.* This study used a scenario measure to examine participants' reactions about growing levels of abuse in a seven-month college relationship. Results showed that on average the most growth in concern over "time" occurred in months 1-4. These months illustrated escalating levels of psychological abuse. The first instance of physical abuse occurred in month five. Overall, there was a spike in level of concern in that month. At this point, the sample was very concerned about the abuse and the concern remained high with the growing levels of physical violence.

Like other studies (Tehee & Esqueda, 2008; Lewis, West, Bautista, Greenberg & Done-Perez, 2005), I highlighted the distinction in people's concern about psychological and physical abuse, showing that physical abuse was consistently alarming to participants, while psychological abuse was related to various levels of concern. For example, while most participants reacted strongly to all forms of physical abuse, not all participants were as concerned with less severe forms of psychological abuse. This supports the idea that psychological abuse should be explored on a continuum rather than in a categorical way.

In an extension of previous research, this study used scenarios to explore reactions to abuse. Using scenarios eliminates the response bias of using focus groups, which were used in previous studies by Lewis, West, Bautista, Greenberg and Done-Perez, (2005) and Agbayani-Siewert and Flanagan, (2001). One problem with focus groups is a potential group bias, in that some members might influence others with their responses, yielding biased reactions to the questions. Using scenarios permitted each



person to answer questions about abuse independently of their peers. With decreased response bias, my findings support past research in showing that there is more variability in how problematic people see psychological abuse, than physical abuse. Thus, using a different methodology yielded additional support for the difference in level of concern for psychological versus physical abuse.

However, the scenarios also allowed for exploration of escalating levels of abuse. Previous studies asked about acts of psychological and physical abuse, but did not gauge how responses change with severity of the abuse (Yick, 2000; Ahn, 2002; Agbayani-Siewert & Flanagan, 2001). Thus, the only distinction drawn in prior research was that people are less concerned about psychological abuse and more concerned about physical abuse. By looking at both psychological and physical abuse on a continuum, I was able to show changes in attitudes corresponding to different types of abuse severity. As mentioned above, this was particularly important for the study of psychological abuse. Thus, one should not perceive psychological abuse as an issue of abuse type, but rather an issue of escalating severity of abuse.

*Disclosure of abuse.* This study measured disclosure differently from tolerance of abuse. After the end of the seventh scenario, participants were reminded of all seven scenarios and were then asked at which scenario they would seek help from three different sources: a friend, a family member and a professional. On average, students stated that they would first seek any type of help around month three. However, students indicated that they would seek formal help later than other types of help, around month five, when the abuse became physical.

The operationalization of disclosure in the current study was different from previous research. Previous research examined help-seeking by recording the percentages of victims from different ethnic groups who sought formal help (Bugarin, 2002) or comparing where victims sought help, such as family members versus formal help sources (i.e., domestic violence agencies) (Kaukinen, 2004). Rather than recording percentages or differences in sources of help, my methods allowed me to examine how events in a relationship are related to disclosure. For example, on average participants stated that they would seek any type of help around month three. In this month, the boyfriend in the relationship became jealous of the girl's other friendships, showing the first instance of him threatening her social relationships. In the study I found that high egalitarian values predicted earlier disclosure of abuse. Possibly, a person with higher egalitarian values would also place more value on their freedom, and might feel that when someone is threatening their social relationships, it is time to seek assistance from another person.

Another example of the utility of asking about events is that on average participants stated they would seek formal help around month five. This month described the first mention of marriage between the fictional characters. This could have been interpreted as the relationship becoming more serious. In conjunction with that, it also described the first instance of physical abuse. Thus, in month five I described a serious dating relationship with the potential for physical harm. As mentioned above, previous research on help-seeking often compared western and non-western cultures, as well as Caucasian women and ethnic minority women. They showed that that people from non-

western cultures and ethnic minorities are less likely to seek formal help (Bugarin, 2002; West, Kantor, & Jasisnki, 1998), indicating that disclosure to formal help sources might be a function of someone's culture. In this study, I have shown that in a largely non-western sample, disclosure to a formal source is related to egalitarian views. Those who are more egalitarian indicate that they would disclose earlier. This supports the notion that disclosure might be function of someone's cultural values.

Another explanation of the results is to consider how the events described at month five might impact disclosure. Thus, disclosure might be a function not only of cultural values but also of the abuse severity as well as the seriousness of the relationship. This gives further evidence that disclosure is dependent on the events that occur in the relationship.

**Cultural values.** This study extended the literature with its exploration of cultural values. In the context of intimate partner violence, Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008) argued that cultural values, specifically egalitarianism and individualism, impact people's tolerance of abuse and help-seeking behaviors. In this study, I empirically tested this argument.

**Egalitarianism.** Regardless of their egalitarian values, people showed high concern for physical abuse. Yet, even with this restriction of range, results from the HLM model showed that high egalitarian values were related to lower tolerance of both psychological and physical abuse. More specifically, the more egalitarian participants were, the faster their concern grew about psychological abuse. However, higher egalitarian values were related to more concern about minor physical abuse, here defined

as a single slap. Egalitarianism was also related to disclosure. The more egalitarian a participant's values were, the sooner they saw a relationship as problematic and the sooner they reported that they would disclose the abuse.

In many ways, these findings are an extension of the previous literature. Past studies have theorized that in cultures where there is an imbalance of power between men and women, people tend to hold more accepting attitudes towards violence against women (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996). In addition, some have proposed that more egalitarian societies are more likely to focus on women's empowerment and thus emphasize how problematic abusive behaviors are and encourage help-seeking (Hay-Yahia and Sadan, 2008). In this paper, these theories were supported empirically. I was able to show that egalitarianism plays a significant role in people's tolerance of abuse and disclosure of abuse. However, I have also added to the literature in two main ways.

First, I showed that egalitarian values are especially important in people's responses to psychological abuse and minor physical abuse. Higher egalitarianism was associated with an increase in concern for psychological abuse and minor physical abuse. These results were supported both by examining the covariance between egalitarianism and concern for abuse, as well as by modeling how individual changes in concern over "time" are explained by egalitarian values. However, cultural values did not impact people's concern for more severe levels of physical abuse. This adds a layer to Haj-Yahia's (1998) theory by showing that egalitarian values do not have an effect on the reaction to severe forms of physical abuse. One explanation might be that when violence

reaches a certain level of physical abuse, individual values matter less since someone's life could be at stake.

Another explanation might be that these results are in the context of a dating relationship. Since people are thinking about a dating relationship they might be less likely to tolerate abuse, since a dating relationship is easier to terminate and they would have less to lose than if they ended a family or marriage relationship. If participants were thinking about a marriage relationship they might be less concerned with physical abuse, since in less egalitarian cultures, violence in a marriage relationship is more easily accepted (Hay-Yahia and Sadan, 2008). Further, if violence is part of a larger cultural power hierarchy - for example, a person saw this in their parents' relationship and other relationships - they might be less likely to be alarmed by physical abuse. Future research should explore these possibilities further.

Second, I showed that there is a link between egalitarianism, tolerance of abuse and disclosure. It appears that the timeframe of disclosure is affected by how tolerant one is of the abuse, which is affected by his or her egalitarian values. This extends previous research by providing partial support for the help-seeking model proposed by Liang, et al. (2005). Specifically, this finding supports the links among cultural values, recognition of abuse and help-seeking.

***Familialism.*** Results showed that familialism was not related to tolerance of psychological abuse; however, people high on familialism were less tolerant of physical abuse. On average, familialism was also not related to when people reported that they

would disclose abuse. However, for participants who had low egalitarian values, stronger familial values (i.e., high familialism) indicated that they would disclose abuse earlier.

These findings contradict previous research and the researcher's predictions, which suggested that cultures high on familialism, where people are focused on maintaining family harmony, might downplay the importance of abuse in order to preserve the family name (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008). Thus, I expected that high familial values would increase tolerance of abuse. However, I found that those values were related to less tolerance of physical abuse and in the absence of egalitarianism they were also related to earlier disclosure. These findings suggest that a focus on family well-being is more of a protective factor in instances of physical abuse, leading someone to disclose the abuse. It is possible that here higher familialism represents higher social support. Social support is known to help people in their efforts to leave abusive relationships and seek help (Smith, 2003; Coker, Smith, Thompson, McKeown, Bethea, & Davis, 2002). Further support of this explanation is provided by the questions used in this scale. Many of the questions talk about reliance on family in "times of need," reliance that "family ties keep me feeling safe and secure," and knowing that "family always is there for me in times of need." If a participant grew up in a family that was very connected and supportive, it may be that the family would encourage the participant to seek formal help if they knew that he or she was in a physically abusive relationship. Thus, having such a family could increase one's social support and help them disclose abuse earlier.

Another possible explanation for these findings is that the relationship I used in this study was a dating relationship, rather than a family one. It is possible that people's

familial values relate differently to their reactions to abuse in a dating relationship, than to their reactions to abuse in a family relationship. For example, the current way of measuring familialism attempts to capture loyalty about family well-being, but does not capture how one would prioritize his or her own well-being over the well-being of their intimate relationship. Thus, in a dating relationship measuring individualism might be a better way to understand loyalty towards a romantic partner. In addition, future research could also expand on this study by using scenarios to describe a family relationship.

*Privacy of family problems.* Privacy of family problems was not related to first disclosure or to disclosure to a professional. This finding did not support previous research, which suggested that keeping family problems private would require all issues that arise within the family unit to be resolved without involving others (Malley-Morrison, 2004; Bui, & Morash, 1999). I expected that those who wanted to keep family problems private would disclose abuse at a later point and would be less likely to disclose to a professional. However, the current findings suggest that in the context of a dating relationship, measuring privacy of family problems is not a good way to gauge people's disclosure of abuse. Similar to familialism, it is possible that using a family relationship would be a better way to understand how people's views on privacy of family problems impact their disclosure.

## **Limitations**

**Sampling issues.** Several issues related to sampling impacted the study. First, the sample was recruited from only three universities in the Washington DC area, and was comprised mostly of graduate students and the rest of undergraduate students. This shows

that the sample was highly educated, which could also be related to their high egalitarian views. One reason for this is that the majority of the students in this sample were pursuing graduate degrees in a co-ed western university. This shows a level of egalitarianism in their families, who have allowed them study in such a university and work towards this high level of education. This dynamic would be more pronounced for women than men. It could also partially explain why the sample was generally less tolerant of abuse. Future research could use a more nationally representative sample of universities or a community sample to examine if these relationships change for a less egalitarian, less educated sample.

The second sampling limitation was the low retention rate of participants. In all three universities, about half of the people completed the study fully and half dropped out from the study after the first or second scenario. This could be due to several factors. One reason might be discomfort with the subject matter. Other reasons might be the impersonal nature of the online data collection, the fact that participants did not receive credit for the study and the low incentive for participation. A way to address these limitations might be to hand out the study in person. Even though participants were provided help resources through the online survey, using a more personal approach will allow people to feel more connected to the researcher and would give the researcher a way to address any discomfort in person. In addition, the researcher might follow up with people who drop-out in order to better understand why this occurs. Lastly, participants could be rewarded research credit or paid for their participation, which will increase the incentive to complete the study.



Another factor is that participants could have had discomfort with the length of the study. This could have discouraged people from participating causing them to drop out after realizing that more scenarios like the one they had just read are to follow. This is evidenced by the fact that most drop-outs happened after the first and second scenarios. One way to alleviate this limitation might be to shorten the scenarios or to inform people of the number of scenarios they are going to have to read and answer questions about prior to the study.

In sum the results of this study reflect the values of people who were fairly comfortable reading in English, were highly educated, were able to answer questions about IPV and were not overly concerned with having a personal connection to the researcher. This suggests that the results should be understood in the context of these sampling limitations. For instance, participants who dropped out of the study due to the reading quantity or discomfort with IPV might represent an even less acculturated sample and thus have different opinions about abuse tolerance and disclosure. However, the current sample provides a good understanding of the reactions of a diverse sample of educated young adults. Thus, the findings are most applicable to this population. This study could be expanded by including samples of different ages and immigration status.

**Methodological limitations.** There were four other limitations in this study. First, the researcher asked participants to answer questions about a relationship they were not in. A benefit of doing this is that it allowed participants to be more objective than they might have been if asked about their own relationship. On the other hand it could have measured how they might react to abuse disclosed by others, and not necessarily how

they themselves would disclose abuse. This could have limited the validity of the findings, because people might tolerate abuse differently if they were faced with it in their own relationship. One way to improve the study would be to ask participants to imagine what they would do if they were the woman in the described relationship. This might be one way to get a more realistic portrayal of how people might react to real abuse in a relationship without actually asking about their real experiences or following people in real abusive relationships. Second, the researcher did not specify the country in which the described relationship took place. Thus, participants could have pictured the abuse in their own country or in the US, with potential implications for their level of concern or attitude about disclosure. Future research could measure if there are differences in these outcomes based on the country where abuse takes place.

Third, the study explored a longitudinal question about escalation of violence and people's tolerance of violence, but measured it in a cross-sectional way. Here I have provided the foundation for supposing it would be worth the resources to do a longitudinal study of tolerance and disclosure of abuse. In a longitudinal study, one would be able to more fully explore the causal links between egalitarianism, tolerance of abuse and disclosure, which were suggested here. In addition, one could study both disclosure and tolerance of abuse in a more behavioral way. Instead of asking about people's perceptions, a researcher could measure participants' behaviors corresponding to escalation in violence. This could be done through the use of a daily diary, for example, where participants would record their behavioral responses to relationship violence. Finally, a longitudinal study would allow for a more realistic portrayal of abuse. It is

possible that abuse in a real relationship would not escalate in such a linear pattern. For example, minor physical abuse might happen earlier and be followed by more psychological abuse, followed by more severe physical abuse and so on. Thus, a longitudinal study would expand the current study and help us further understand how cultural values impact tolerance of abuse and disclosure.

Fourth, the study did not control for gender differences. Other than the preliminary analyses, gender was not a major part of this study. The preliminary analyses showed that there were differences between men and women that could be further explored. Specifically, the analyses showed that men tended to be more private, but less egalitarian, less concerned about violence and more tolerant of abuse. One possible explanation for these differences is that men could have had a difficult time picturing themselves as the victim, since the victim in the scenarios was female. Thus, it would have been harder for them to imagine how they would react to the described abuse, which in turn would result in them appearing less concerned for the abuse. However, it is unclear what men were thinking about as they read the scenarios. It is possible that men in general have a higher tolerance for abuse. Thus, future research could expand on the current study by examining men's reactions to abuse in more detail.

Despite these limitations the study helps to lay down the groundwork for how some cultural values might impact tolerance of abuse and disclosure in a dating relationship. It provides the foundation and support for future research to study these questions in real abusive relationships over time.

### **Implications for research and practice**

**Implications for research.** The results of this study have six main implications for future research. First, the study was grounded in the theoretical help-seeking model proposed by Liang, et al., (2005). The study sought to validate empirically a part of the model focused on sociocultural variables' relationship to recognition and disclosure of abuse. Here I showed that a subset of sociocultural factors – specific cultural values – impact both recognition and disclosure of abuse. These findings add specificity to a broad supposition, which stated that sociocultural variables impact recognition of abuse, disclosure and selection of help sources. I have done this by showing the particular ways in which the cultural values of egalitarianism and familialism are related to these outcomes.

These findings lay the groundwork for future research examining these relationships further by including other sociocultural variables, such as other cultural values (i.e., masculinity, collectivism, power), socioeconomic status (suggested by Liang, et al., (2005), and expanding to other types of abusive relationships, such as a marriage relationship. In addition, as suggested earlier, this model could be studied in a longitudinal way. Liang, el al., (2005) proposed that the help-seeking process is complicated by its cyclical nature, where recognition, decision and selection, continue to inform one another and shape future thoughts and behaviors. Longitudinal data would allow researchers to examine how the cyclical nature of the process is influenced by sociocultural variables.

Second, this study highlighted a difference in level of concern for psychological and physical abuse. It showed that physical abuse was clearer and people were concerned

about it regardless of their values. This supports studies showing that severe forms of physical abuse were generally considered problematic by people of all cultures (Acevedo, 2000; Yick 2000). On the other hand, the study showed that people vary more in their level of concern for psychological abuse, supporting the idea different cultures might view psychological abuse differently, especially those with low egalitarian values. However, egalitarian values did not fully explain the variability in concern for psychological abuse. Thus, future research could consider further exploring how other cultural values influence people's tolerance of psychological abuse. For instance, cultures that value masculinity and aggression might have different expectations of how men should behave in relationships. This might mean that men express themselves in more aggressive ways, both physically and psychologically. Thus, people high on those values would be less concerned about both psychological and physical abuse.

Third, using the theory proposed by Haj-Yahia and Sadan (2008), this study has shown empirically that cultural values can be studied meaningfully across cultures. The findings stated above, regarding egalitarianism and familialism, help maintain the utility of exploring cultural values rather than someone's ethnic group. This suggests that in the context of abuse recognition and disclosure, future research could expand by examining other cultural values such as masculinity, achievement, assertiveness, tradition vs. novelty, modesty, and harmony. These values represent the other dimensions of culture that Hofstede (1983) found cultures to vary on. By studying these other dimensions, future research would continue to further understand how cultural values impact perceptions of abuse and help-seeking.

Given the current results, masculinity and assertiveness might be particularly interesting to explore. In cultures where masculine values such as bravery and aggression are cultural norms we would expect that interpersonal violence, both psychological and physical, might be viewed as normal. Thus, people in those cultures would be more tolerant of abuse. On the other hand, assertiveness might represent more egalitarian cultures, where people are encouraged to stand up for themselves. Thus, assertiveness, similar to egalitarianism, might predict lower tolerance and earlier disclosure of abuse.

In addition to these cultural values, future research could explore the impact of acculturation on tolerance of abuse and disclosure. The exploratory results in this study show that higher acculturation is related to less concern for abuse. This could be an artifact of the way acculturation was measured in this study. For instance, in this study the researcher did not measure acculturation by examining the levels of acculturation – integration, assimilation and separation. This does not allow us to differentiate between someone who is high on integration (i.e., has embraced both cultures) versus someone who is high on assimilation (i.e., has embraced only the dominant culture and rejected their heritage) versus someone who is high on separation (i.e., has embraced only the heritage culture and rejected the dominant culture) (Sam & Berry, 2010).. All of these three types of people might score similarly on a general acculturation measure, such as the one used in this study. However, it follows that they would have very different reactions to abuse. Thus, future research is needed to examine how these different levels of acculturation impact abuse recognition and disclosure. A related variable that could be of interest in future work is cultural mistrust, which is seen in the mistrust towards the

dominant culture. People who have a lot of cultural mistrust might be less likely to seek help, especially from formal help sources due to their beliefs that such sources would not be sensitive to diversity issues. Future research could examine how cultural mistrust impacts people's disclosure of abuse.

A fourth implication is that cultural values can be studied in various types of relationships. Here I used a dating relationship. However, many researchers talk about cultural values in marriage relationships (Galanti, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Xu et al., 2001). As mentioned earlier, one way to expand this study is to use a marriage relationship, which would further inform how family values, specifically privacy of family problems and familialism impact tolerance of abuse and disclosure. Moreover, research could be expanded to other types of relationships, such as parent-child relationships and family relationships. By doing this, the field would advance in understanding if cultural values impact different relationships in unique ways. For example, research could explore if egalitarian values are still related to low tolerance of abuse and earlier disclosure in an abusive marriage or parental relationship.

Fifth, in addition to tolerance of abuse and disclosure, future research could examine additional outcomes, such as mental health problems, aggression and substance abuse (Triandis, 1995). For example, cultures see mental health in different ways and have various priorities about seeking help for such difficulties. Similar to abuse tolerance, it might be true that people who are low on egalitarianism might not be as concerned about their mental health and thus tolerate higher levels of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. Thus, future research could explore the utility of using cultural

values to predict other areas of difficulty for people. This will continue to move the field towards studying culture by examining relevant values, rather than using ethnic groups as a proxy.

Finally, the preliminary analyses of the study laid the groundwork for further exploration of gender differences in the context of cultural values and abuse. In the prior theoretical models used by this study (Liang, et.al., (2005); Haj-Yahia & Sadan, (2008) there has been a focus on women's reactions to abuse. However, this has left out men's reactions, both as the perpetrator and the victim. In this study, I found that there are gender differences both in specific cultural values (i.e., egalitarianism and familialism), as well as attitudes towards violence and tolerance of abuse. These differences need to be further explored. One way to do this is to examine how men's reactions to abuse might differ if the victim is male. This could be done both in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. It is possible that in this scenario we would observe reactions similar to those of the women in this study. Future research needs to explore these possibilities further.

**Implications for practice.** The main implication for clinical practice is the importance of cultural values in dating relationships. In clinical practice, there is a need for cultural competence. Sue, Ivy and Pedersen (1996) suggest a general framework to conceptualize the areas of proficiency that constitute cultural competence. Those areas include: cultural awareness (i.e., practitioners' self-knowledge of their own biases and how those may influence the client and the therapeutic alliance), cultural knowledge (i.e., knowledge about the client's cultural values, beliefs and expectations) and cultural skills



(i.e., ability to provide culturally competent treatment). By increasing cultural competence in the proposed areas, practitioners will improve the therapeutic alliance with their clients, increasing treatment success (Sue, et. al., 1996). In addition, increased cultural competence will also assist with the issue of cultural mistrust. Cultural mistrust is seen across different cultural groups and is most evident when someone from an ethnic minority group seeks help from a formal agency, such as a counselor (Gardiner, 2006). In this instance, the cultural differences between the counselor and the client could make the client feel misunderstood and could prevent them from seeking help in the future.

Achieving a high level of cultural competence can be challenging, especially since practitioners typically see many clients. Learning about every specific culture and how it might affect tolerance of abuse, for example, can be cumbersome and almost impossible. However, if practitioners have a general sense of certain values that impact tolerance of abuse for people of all cultures, this would give them a helpful direction to explore with clients. While information on general trends does not nullify the need to understand an individual client, having a knowledge base can give a practitioner a good starting point for asking questions. It can also inform the help-seeking process by keeping practitioners sensitive to the barriers victims face.

APPENDIX

Table 1  
*Descriptive variables for study participants*

	<b>Study Participants (n=203)</b>
Age	25.5 (5.29)
Graduate students	70.4%
Undergraduate students	23.6%
Amount of time in US	3.3 (3.52)
Highest level of education attained	
High school/GED	17.2 %
Junior college (A.A.)	3.0 %
College/trade school (B.A., B.S.)	38.4 %
Masters degree (M.A., M.S.)	38.9 %
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	2.5%
Married	14.78%
Income	15694.87 (17406.67)

*Note.* For continuous variables, cell values = mean (standard deviation).

Table 2  
*Descriptives for study variables*

	Mean (SD)	Range
Egalitarianism	4.18 (.59)	1-5
Familialism	3.90 (.79)	1-5
Privacy family	3.38 (.75)	1-5
Privacy self	3.28 (.58)	1-5
Attitudes Towards Wife Abuse (VAW)	1.93 (.86)	1-7
Acculturation	2.38 (.28)	1-4
First Disclosure	3.52 (1.43)	1-7
Tolerance of physical abuse	4.83 (.56)	1-5
Tolerance of psychological abuse	4.03 (.74)	1-5
Tolerance of total abuse	4.15 (.53)	1-5

*Note.* For all variables, cell values = mean (standard deviation).

Table 3  
*Correlations Between Predictor and Outcome Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Egalitarianism	-	.07	-.20**	-.17*	-.67**	-.48**	-.19**	.43**	.35**	.38**
2. Familialism	-	-	.22**	.03	-.14*	.41**	-.05	.19**	.05	.13
3. Privacy family	-	-	-	.52**	.04	.21**	.12	.08	-.15*	-.10
4. Privacy self	-	-	-	-	.15*	.19**	.36**	.06	-.07	-.07
5. VAW	-	-	-	-	-	.37**	.23**	-.47**	-.36**	-.43**
6. Acculturation	-	-	-	-	-	-	.10	-.16*	-.19**	-.18**
7. First discl.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.07	-.16*	-.17*
8. Tol. physical	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.48**	.74**
9. Tol. psych.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.90**
10. Tol. abuse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note.* For all variables, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . Abbreviations: VAW = Attitudes about Violence Against Women; Tol. Physical = Tolerance for Physical Abuse; Tol. Psych = Tolerance for Psychological Abuse; Tol. Abuse = Tolerance of all abuse.

Table 4  
*Results of piecewise hierarchical linear models for tolerance of abuse as predicted by egalitarianism and familialism*

		Full Model			
Psych. Abuse		$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$F(203)$	
Level 1	Within Person	.61 (.03)	.33	407.19**	
		Egalitarianism	Familialism		
		$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$F(203)$
Level 2	Intercept	-.24 (.15)	.14 (.11)	.02	1.99
	Rate of change	.21 (.04)	-.04 (.03)	.11	12.02**
Physical Abuse		Full Model			
		$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$F(203)$	
Level 1	Within Person	.05 (.03)	.01	3.97	
		Egalitarianism	Familialism		
		$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$F(203)$
Level 2	Intercept	.46 (.08)	.08 (.06)	.15	18.26**
	Rate of change	-.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.01	1.34

*Note.* For all variables, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 5  
*Mediational analysis for tolerance abuse as mediator of the relationship between egalitarianism and timeframe for disclosure.*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
Testing Step 1:				
Outcome: First Disclosure				
Predictor: Egalitarianism	-.46	.17	-.19	-2.69**
Testing Step 2:				
Outcome: Tolerance of abuse				
Predictor: Egalitarianism	.35	.06	.38	5.87**
Testing Step 3:				
Outcome: First disclosure				
Mediator: Tolerance of abuse	-.45	.19	-.17	-2.41*
Predictor: Egalitarianism	-.35	.18	-.14	-1.92

*Note.* For all variables, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 6  
*Moderational analyses; egalitarianism as moderator between familialism and both tolerance of abuse and timeframe for disclosure*

	<i>Change in R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>F change</i>
<b><u>Tolerance of abuse</u></b>				
Step 1	.156			18.52**
Familialism		.07	.04	
Egalitarianism		.34	.06	
Step 2	.003			.79
Familialism x Egalitarianism		.04	.04	
<b><u>Timeframe for disclosure</u></b>				
Step 1	.036			3.77*
Familialism		-.07	.13	
Egalitarianism		-.45	.17	
Step 2	.035			7.55**
Familialism x Egalitarianism		.33	.12	

*Note.* For all variables, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

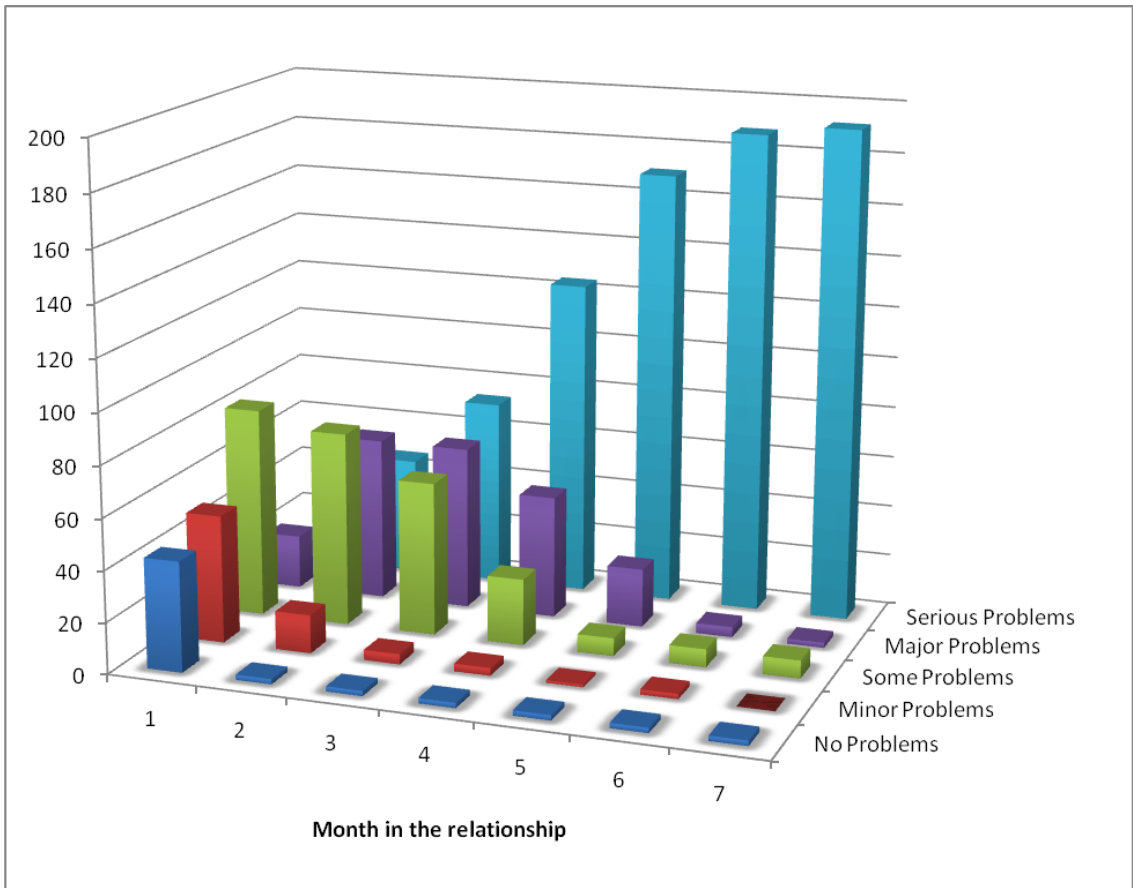


Figure 1.

*Individual growth of concern over time.*



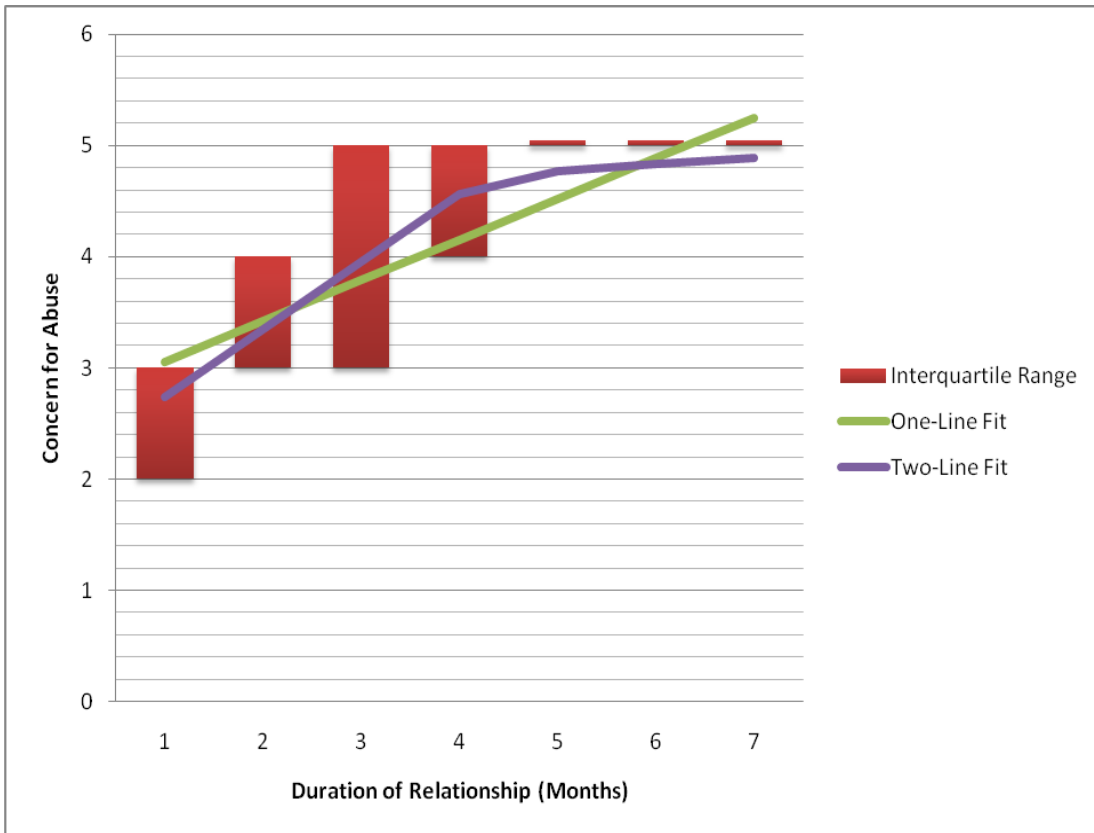


Figure 2.

*One-line vs. two-line functions of individual changes in growth of concern over time.*

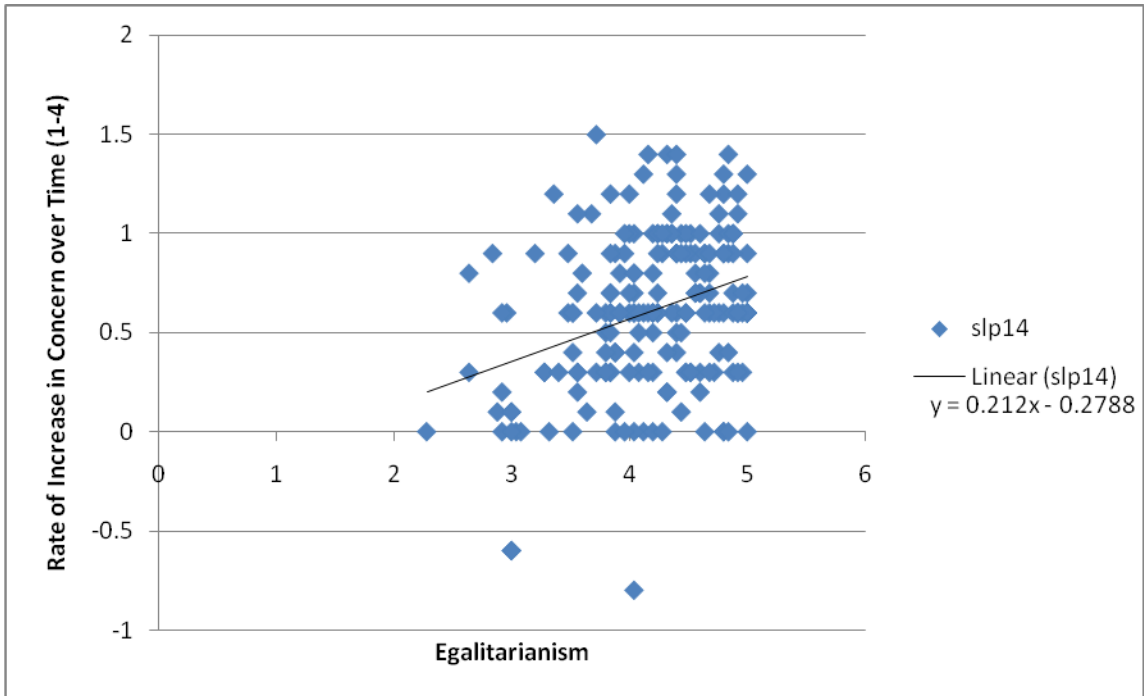


Figure 3.

*Changes in individuals' concern growth rate for psychological abuse over time as predicted by egalitarian values. (Months 1-4)*

*Note.* An individual's "concern growth rate" is the slope of the regression line for the dependent concern variable over the independent egalitarianism variable (See Figure 1).

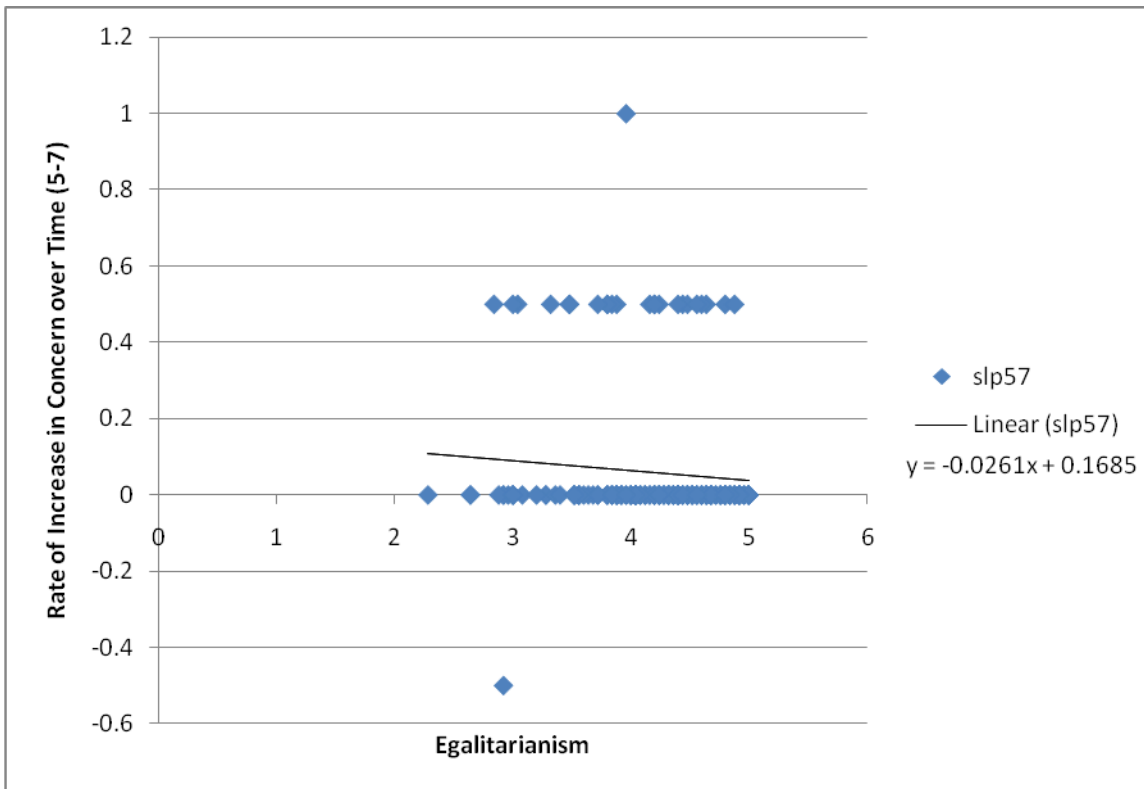


Figure 4.

*Changes in individuals' concern growth rate for physical abuse over time as predicted by egalitarian values. (Months 5-7)*

*Note.* An individual's "concern growth rate" is the slope of the regression line for the dependent concern variable over the independent egalitarianism variable (See Figure 1).

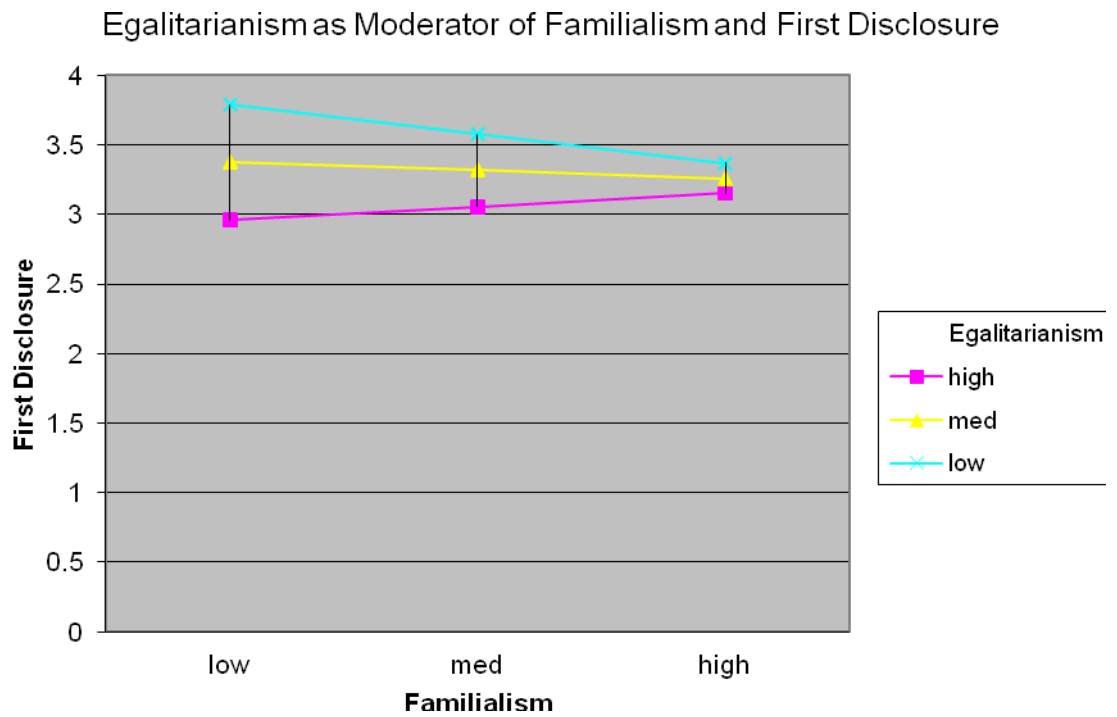


Figure 5.

*Changes in the relationship between familialism and first disclosure for low, medium and high egalitarian values.*

## Measures

### Demographics

Please answer the following questions about yourself. Circle the correct number

1. What year in school are you?

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Freshman.....  | 1 |
| Sophomore..... | 2 |
| Junior.....    | 3 |
| Senior.....    | 4 |
| Graduate.....  | 5 |
| Other _____    |   |

2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you currently

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Married.....               | 1 |
| Living with someone.....   | 2 |
| Widowed.....               | 3 |
| Divorced.....              | 4 |
| Separated.....             | 5 |
| Single, never married..... | 6 |

4. How long have you lived in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_ years

5. What is your country of origin? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your first language?

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| English..... | 1 |
| Spanish..... | 2 |
| French.....  | 3 |
| German.....  | 4 |
| Arabic.....  | 5 |
| Hebrew.....  | 6 |
| Russian..... | 7 |
| Other _____  |   |

7. What is your occupation?

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Unemployed.....   | 1 |
| Housewife.....    | 2 |
| Student.....      | 3 |
| Manual work.....  | 4 |
| Skilled work..... | 5 |

Clerical, salesperson.....	6
Semi-professional, manager.....	7
Professional.....	8
Self-employed.....	9

8. What is your total annual income? \$\_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the highest degree or diplomas you have attained? (Circle the highest degree)

Less than high school.....	1
High school diploma (or equivalent).....	2
Junior college degree (A.A.).....	3
Bachelors degree (B.A., B.S.).....	4
Masters degree (M.A., M.S.).....	5
Doctorate (Ph.D.).....	6
Professional (M.D., J.D., etc.).....	7

10. What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian.....	1
African American.....	2
Hispanic.....	3
Latino.....	4
Asian American.....	5
Pacific Islander.....	6
Arab.....	7
Multiracial.....	8
Other_____	

## Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women

Below are a number of statements about behaviors you may see in a relationship that some people agree with and others disagree with. Please show how much you agree or disagree with each statement by placing a check after one of the levels of agreement. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. A girlfriend should leave the relationship if a boyfriend hits her.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

2. A man is never justified in hitting his girlfriend.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

3. A man should have the right to discipline his girlfriend when it is necessary.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

4. A man's home is his castle.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

5. A man should be arrested if he hits his girlfriend.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

6. A man is entitled to sex with his girlfriend whenever he wants it.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

7. In marriage, wife beating is grounds for divorce. .

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_

8. Some women seem to ask for beatings from their boyfriends.

Strongly Agree\_\_      Agree\_\_      Slightly Agree\_\_      Neither Agree Nor  
Disagree\_\_      Slightly disagree\_\_      Disagree\_\_      Strongly Disagree\_\_



## Privacy Scale

Imagine you are having a problem in a relationship that is important to you, and that the problem is serious enough to cause you distress and occupy your mind much of the time. To what extent would the following statements describe you? Write the number corresponding to your level of agreement or disagreement in the blank line in front of each item.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_ 1. I am very careful about who I tell about this problem.
- \_\_\_ 2. I work hard to keep this problem a secret.
- \_\_\_ 3. I share this problem with my co-workers
- \_\_\_ 4. I share this problem with my fellow students.
- \_\_\_ 5. I share this problem with my close friends.
- \_\_\_ 6. I share this problem with my acquaintances.
- \_\_\_ 7. I share this problem with my family members.
- \_\_\_ 8. With people I don't know very well, I make a special effort to keep the problem to myself.
- \_\_\_ 9. Telling someone about this problem is risky.
- \_\_\_ 10. In many areas of my life, no one knows about this problem.
- \_\_\_ 11. I worry that people may judge me if they find out about this problem.
- \_\_\_ 12. There is no reason for me to hide the fact that I am dealing with this problem.
- \_\_\_ 13. It is easier for me to avoid new relationships than worry about telling someone that I am dealing with this problem.

Now imagine that you have talked about this problem with your family. To what extent would the following statements describe what you think your family should do? Write the number corresponding to your level of agreement or disagreement in the blank line in front of each item.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

My family should...

- \_\_\_ 1. keep the problem private.

- \_\_\_ 2. be very careful about who they tell about this problem.
- \_\_\_ 3. keep my problem to themselves.
- \_\_\_ 4. view telling others about this problem as risky.
- \_\_\_ 5. expect me to share this problem with them and no others.
- \_\_\_ 6. worry that others would judge us if they knew about this problem.
- \_\_\_ 7. see no reason to hide this problem from others.
- \_\_\_ 8. be in agreement that it is important to keep problems within the family.

## Familialism

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Write the number corresponding to your level of agreement or disagreement in the blank line in front of each item.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_ 1. When it comes to social responsibility, blood really is thicker than water.
- \_\_\_ 2. My family always is there for me in times of need.
- \_\_\_ 3. I owe it to my parents to do well in life.
- \_\_\_ 4. I know that my family has my best interests in mind.
- \_\_\_ 5. I cherish the time that I spend with my relatives.
- \_\_\_ 6. I will do all that I can to keep alive the traditions passed on to me by my parents and grandparents.
- \_\_\_ 7. Even when I'm far away from home, my family ties keep me feeling safe and secure.
- \_\_\_ 8. To this day, my parents' teachings serve as my best guide to behavior.
- \_\_\_ 9. In my opinion, the family is the most important social institution of all.
- \_\_\_ 10. I cannot imagine what I would do without my family.

## Egalitarianism

Below are statements about men and women. Read each statement and decide how much you agree or disagree. We are not interested in what society says. We are interested in *your personal opinions*. For each statement, circle the letter that describes your opinion. Please *do not omit* any statements. Remember circle *only one* of the five choices for each statement:

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

N = Neutral or undecided or no opinion

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly disagree

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Women should have as much right as men to go to a bar.   | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 2. Clubs for students in nursing should admit only women.   | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 3. Industrial training schools ought to admit more qualified females.                                 | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 4. Women ought to have the same chances as men to be leaders at work.                                 | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 5. Keeping track of a child's activities should be mostly the mother's task.                          | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 6. Things work out best in a marriage if the husband stays away from housekeeping tasks.              | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 7. Both the husband's and wife's earnings should be controlled by the husband.                        | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 8. A woman should not be President of the United States.  | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 9. Women should feel as free to "drop in" on a male friend as vice versa.                             | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 10. Males should be given first choice to take courses that train people as school principals.        | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 11. When both husband and wife work outside the home, housework should be equally shared.             | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 12. Women can handle job pressures as well as men can.  | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 13. Male managers are more valuable to a business than female managers.                               | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 14. A woman should have as much right to ask a man for a date as a man has to ask a woman for a date. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 15. The father, rather than the mother, should give teenage children                                  | SA | A | N | D | SD |

	permission to use the family car.					
16.	Sons and daughters ought to have an equal chance for higher education.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17.	A marriage will be more successful if the husband's needs are considered first.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18.	Fathers are better able than mothers to decide the amount of a child's allowance.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19.	The mother should be in charge of getting children to after-school activities.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20.	A person should be more polite to a woman than a man.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21.	Women should feel as free as men to express their honest opinion.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22.	Fathers are not as able to care for their sick children as mothers are.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23.	An applicant's sex should be important in job screening.	SA	A	N	D	SD
24.	Wives are better able than husbands to send thank you notes for gifts.	SA	A	N	D	SD
25.	Choice of college is not as important for women as for men.	SA	A	N	D	SD

## Acculturation

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please show how much you agree or disagree with each statement by placing a check after one of the levels of agreement. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. One should be able to question a person in authority (in other words, person in charge such as boss, teacher, police officer).

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

2. One need not minimize one's own achievements.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

3. Younger people should be able to confront their elders.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

4. One need not remain reserved and tranquil.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

5. One need not focus all energies on one's studies.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

6. One need not be able to resolve psychological problems on one's own.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

7. One should not make waves (in other words, change an existing situation in way which causes problems or upsets people).

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

8. One should be discouraged from talking about one's accomplishments.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

9. One need not follow the role expectations (gender, family hierarchy) of one's family.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

10. Family's reputation is not the primary social concern.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

11. One should not deviate from familial and social norms.

Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

12. The worst thing one can do is to bring disgrace to one's family reputation.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
13. One should think about one's group before oneself.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
14. Occupational failure does not bring shame to the family.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
15. One's achievements should be viewed as family's achievements.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
16. Educational and career achievements need not be one's top priority.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
17. One need not control one's expression of emotions.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
18. When one receives a gift, one should reciprocate with a gift of equal or greater value.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
19. One should consider the needs of others before considering one's own needs.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
20. One should have sufficient inner resources to resolve emotional problems.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
21. One should avoid bringing displeasure to one's ancestors.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
22. Children should not place their parents in retirement homes.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
23. One should be humble and modest.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_
24. Modesty is an important quality for a person.  
Strongly Disagree\_\_ Disagree\_\_ Agree\_\_ Strongly Agree\_\_

## Scenarios

### **Sarah and Mark have been dating for 1 month**

Sarah and Mark are dating. For both of them this is their first college relationship. They see and each other every day. They also call each other every day – five or six times, and eat all their meals together. They often buy each other small gifts and go places together. They both spend more time with each other than with their friends.

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---



### **Sarah and Mark have been dating for 2 months**

Sarah and Mark continue to see each other every day. Mark says that he loves Sarah so much that he would like to spend even more time together. He has started picking her up after classes and activities. Last week Sarah joined a group and was assigned a project to complete with another student, who is male. After a group meeting she was standing outside talking with this classmate. Mark was waiting for her, and when she got to the car he told her that he had stuff to do and silently drove her back to her dorm. Sarah tried to call him several times the next day but he did not answer. When he called her back a day later he said he was upset that he was talking to another man and kept him waiting, but did not want to argue about it.

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 3 months.**

Mark usually calls Sarah several times most evenings. Last night Sarah was talking on the phone with a friend. She made sure not to talk a long time because she knew Mark would be calling, but she still missed his call. Mark got very upset when Sarah did not pick up the phone right away. He told her that she is inconsiderate and selfish because she doesn't care about how much he worries her when she doesn't answer the phone.”

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah’s relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah’s relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah’s behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 4 months.**

Mark and Sarah have been arguing more and have not been going out as much. They decided to go out to have fun like they used to. They ended up going dancing. As the night went on, Mark got more and more quiet and stopped dancing. When Sarah asked him what's wrong he said he wanted to leave. While driving home they started arguing again. Mark said: "You were acting like a slut and you couldn't even tell I was your boyfriend." Sarah started crying and said: "I feel like I am always making you mad and I don't know how to stop." Mark hugged her and said: "I love you and I don't want other guys looking at you. You need to start thinking about my feelings more, but I forgive you."

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 5 months.**

Sarah and Mark have continued to have arguments, but say that they love each other and sometimes talk about what it would be like to get married. Each morning they talk on the phone and tell each other their plans for the day, and Mark periodically shows up at Sarah's classes or job. One time when Mark was trying to surprise Sarah after class she was not there. Later that evening he accused her of skipping class to be with another guy and asked to see her cell phone call list. When she said no, he slapped her. Mark apologized for slapping her, but said: "if you had just shown me your call list that wouldn't have happened".

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---

### **Sarah and Mark have been dating for 6 months**

Mark and Sarah were walking in the mall, and they ran into a male friend of Sarah's from high school. The friend asked Sarah to exchange numbers so they can get together and catch up. Sarah said: "I am in a hurry, but I'll see you around." After they walked away, Mark grabbed Sarah by the arm and said: "I want to talk to you now!" He pulled her into a quiet hallway near the restrooms. When Sarah said he was hurting her arm, he put his face close to her and whispered: "you have really crossed the line. I am sick of you embarrassing me. What is wrong with you? I've had it!!" He pushed her into the wall and she hit her head. A person walking by asked if everything is OK. They both said yes.

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

1. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

---

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 7 months.**

Mark and Sarah have continued to argue and Mark has hit and pushed her on other occasions. One evening, Sarah called and told Mark that things have gotten too intense and she needs some time to herself to think. Mark showed up at Sarah's dorm later that night. He began yelling outside of her room and kicking the door. Worried that her neighbors will hear this, she let him in. Mark continued to yell: "This is not over!" He hit and kicked Sarah. She ran away and locked herself in the bathroom. He threatened her that if she does not come out he will break down the door. Sarah came out of the bathroom saying: "Can we talk?" Mark knocked her to the ground, kicked her and said: "Now we can talk."

1) Thinking about the romantic relationships you know of, does Mark and Sarah's relationship sound:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all similar		somewhat similar		very similar

2) From the information you do you think Mark and Sarah's relationship has:

1	2	3	4	5
no problems		has minor problems		serious problems

2. To what extent would you consider Mark's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

4) To what extent would you consider Sarah's behavior a problem?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all		somewhat		extremely

5) What are your thoughts about this scenario.

**Please look back through the scenarios you just read.**

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 1 month**

Sarah and Mark are dating. For both of them this is their first college relationship. They see and each other every day. They also call each other every day – five or six times, and eat all their meals together. They often buy each other small gifts and go places together. They both spend more time with each other than with their friends.

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 2 months**

Sarah and Mark continue to see each other every day. Mark says that he loves Sarah so much that he would like to spend even more time together. He has started picking her up after classes and activities. Last week Sarah joined a group and was assigned a project to complete with another student, who is male. After a group meeting she was standing outside talking with this classmate. Mark was waiting for her, and when she got to the car he told her that he had stuff to do and silently drove her back to her dorm. Sarah tried to call him several times the next day but he did not answer. When he called her back the next day he said he was upset that he was talking to another man and kept him waiting, but did not want to argue about it.

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 3 months.**

Mark usually calls Sarah several times most evenings. Last night Sarah was talking on the phone with a friend. She made sure not to talk a long time because she knew Mark would be calling, but she still missed his call. Mark got very upset when Sarah did not pick up the phone right away. He told her that she is inconsiderate and selfish because she doesn't care about how much he worries her when she doesn't answer the phone.”

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 4 months.**

Mark and Sarah have been arguing more and have not been going out as much. They decided to go out to have fun like they used to. They ended up going dancing. As the night went on, Mark got more and more quiet and stopped dancing. When Sarah asked him what's wrong he said he wanted to leave. While driving home they started arguing again. Mark said: “You were acting like a slut and you couldn't even tell I was your boyfriend.” Sarah started crying and said: “I feel like I am always making you mad and I don't know how to stop.” Mark hugged her and said: “I love you and I don't want other guys looking at you. You need to start thinking about my feelings more, but I forgive you.”

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 5 months.**

Sarah and Mark have continued to have arguments, but say that they love each other and sometimes talk about what it would be like to get married. Each morning they talk on the phone and tell each other their plans for the day, and Mark periodically shows up at Sarah's classes or job. One time when Mark was trying to surprise Sarah after class she was not there. Later that evening he accused her of skipping class to be with another guy and asked to see her cell phone call list. When she said no, he slapped her. Mark apologized for

slapping her, but said: “if you had just shown me your call list that wouldn’t have happened”.

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 6 months**

Mark and Sarah were walking in the mall, and they ran into a male friend of Sarah’s from high school. The friend asked Sarah to exchange numbers so they can get together and catch up. Sarah said: “I am in a hurry, but I’ll see you around.” After they walked away, Mark grabbed Sarah by the arm and said: “I want to talk to you now!” He pulled her into a quiet hallway near the restrooms. When Sarah said he was hurting her arm, he put his face close to her and whispered: “you have really crossed the line. I am sick of you embarrassing me. What is wrong with you? I’ve had it!!” He pushed her into the wall and she hit her head. A person walking by asked if everything is OK. They both said yes.

**Sarah and Mark have been dating for 7 months.**

Mark and Sarah have continued to argue and Mark has hit and pushed her on other occasions. One evening, Sarah called and told Mark that things have gotten too intense and she needs some time to herself to think. Mark showed up at Sarah’s dorm later that night. He began yelling outside of her room and kicking the door. Worried that her neighbors will hear this, she let him in. Mark continued to yell: “This is not over!” He hit and kicked Sarah. She ran away and locked herself in the bathroom. He threatened her that if she does not come out he will break down the door. Sarah came out of the bathroom saying: “Can we talk?” Mark knocked her to the ground, kicked her and said: “Now we can talk.”

If this was a relationship you were in, at what point would you talk with someone about what was happening in the relationship. Please circle at which month in the relationship you would talk to...

a) a close friend:

Never    Month 1    Month 2    Month 3    Month 4    Month 5    Month 6    Month 7

b) a family member:

Never    Month 1    Month 2    Month 3    Month 4    Month 5    Month 6    Month 7

c) a professional:

Never    Month 1    Month 2    Month 3    Month 4    Month 5    Month 6    Month 7

Who would you be most likely to contact first

- a) religious leader
- b) therapist
- c) counselor
- d) doctor



- e) hotline
- f) other \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension level

Please rate how well you understood the questions that were asked in his survey.

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all		Well		Excellent

## REFERENCES

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Adriana Pilafova graduated from Fair Lawn High School, Fair Lawn, New Jersey in 2003. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from The College of New Jersey in 2006. Following her undergraduate degree she began work on her doctorate degree at George Mason University. She received her Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology in January 2008. She is to receive her Doctor of Philosophy degree in January 2012.