5-2022

It's Not You, It's Me: Relationship Conflict, Self-Criticism, and Emotion Regulation

Danielle Shaver
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

It's Not You, It's Me: Relationship Conflict, Self-Criticism, and Emotion Regulation

An Honors Thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Arkansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors Studies in Psychological Science

By

Danielle A. Shaver

Spring 2022

Department of Psychological Science

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Arkansas

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must express my sincere gratitude to my thesis mentor, Dr. Veilleux. In my first month of college, I made it a goal to join your lab, but my experience with you in the past three years has pushed me to grow exponentially—academically, professionally, and personally. Although this process involved being thrown into the deep end a couple of times, I would not have accomplished nearly as much without your consistency and support. You modeled what it looked like to exist confidently and unapologetically as a woman in academia, and for that, I am grateful.

Next, I would like to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Professor Whitney Payne and Dr. Anastasia Makhanova. Respectively, you introduced me to the fields of substance use disorders and social psychology while showing what it means to enthusiastically pursue your field of research and practice. I would also like to thank the University of Arkansas Honors College who supported this research with an Honors College Research Grant. This support allowed me to collect data unhindered and compile necessary materials for this project. I am beyond grateful for your continuous generosity.

Finally, I would like to thank the friends and family who have walked closely by my side, showing me unconditional support when this project felt impossible. You all listened as the phrase "maladaptive emotion regulation" became a part of my everyday vocabulary, and I have to express my thanks for that fact alone. You all know that I do not shy away from cheesy and cliché words of affirmation, so I'm here to say that I could not have done it without you.

Abstract

Close relationships are of immense importance to personal well-being, and regulating emotions after interpersonal conflict is essential to promoting relationship stability and mental health. Across two studies, we examined if individual differences (self-criticism) would interact with situational context (relationship factors) to predict emotion regulation use following relationship conflict. In Study 1 (n = 177), we hypothesized self-criticism would predict maladaptive emotion regulation (etc., rumination, withdrawal) and that these associations would be greater in romantic relationships than friendships. Participants completed a self-criticism measure and were randomly assigned to describe a conflict in either a romantic relationship or friendship. They then rated their negative emotions and the emotion regulation strategies used following the conflict. Results revealed that high self-criticism predicted greater use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, but relationship type did not affect strategy use. In Study 2 (n = 315*)*, we focused on relationship factors (i.e., closeness, importance, etc.) instead of relationship type. Results revealed that self-criticism was associated with greater maladaptive regulation and lower adaptive strategies. Also, independent from self-criticism and negative emotion, greater relationship satisfaction and emotional vulnerability predicted greater adaptive emotion regulation; greater emotion invalidation from a conflict partner predicted greater maladaptive regulation use; and greater relationship importance predicted greater adaptive strategy use and cognitive focus. Contrary to our hypotheses, self-criticism did not moderate these effects. Future research might seek to explore causal relationships and underlying reasons for the effects of self-criticism and relationship factors on emotion regulation use (e.g., regulation motives).

It's not you, it's me: Relationship conflict, self-criticism, and emotion regulation

Close relationships can offer intimacy, commitment, and social support (Farrell et al., 2018; Mikulincer et al., 2010). Yet, it is common knowledge that close relationships can also be confusing, frustrating, and just plain hard. Industries of relationship experts, self-help books, and talk show hosts profit from instructing the public on how to maintain relationships with friends, families, coworkers, and romantic partners. They prompt the question: What are you doing wrong in your relationships?

People might think that obsessing over this question could make them an ideal partner. However, an ironic pattern has appeared in past research. The people who tend to criticize themselves, their relationships, and their goals more often tend to have more social difficulties, more negative affect during social interactions, and lower satisfaction in their social support systems (Holm-Denoma et al., 2008; Mongrain & Zuroff, 1995; Moskowitz & Zuroff, 1991; Whiffen et al., 2000). Some researchers have theorized that the relational difficulties of those with greater self-criticism could appear because people with high self-criticism tend to react with more maladaptive emotion regulation techniques (Holm-Denoma et al., 2008; Sedikides & Michelle, 2008). Yet, qualities of a relationship itself could also account for different reactions (Lindsey, 2020; Marroquín & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015). The purpose of the current research was to understand the associations between relationship factors, self-criticism, and emotion regulation following a relationship conflict and to examine how self-criticism interacts with relationship factors to impact emotion regulation.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation refers to conscious and unconscious processes people use to "influence which emotions they have, when these emotions appear, and how they experience or

express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275). Emotion regulation is a broad term referring to processes that occur before, during, and after an emotional stimulus (e.g., relationship conflict) or an emotion (e.g., anger, sadness, happiness). For example, an individual may ignore a difficult topic of conversation to avoid experiencing distress (antecedent-focused regulation). On the other hand, after a relationship conflict, someone may engage in avoidance to decrease the already-elicited distress (response-focused regulation). Compared to antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies that occur before the initiation of an emotion, response-focused emotion regulation strategies involves influencing psychological, behavioral, or experiential responses after the emotion has already been initiated or experienced, such as in the case after relationship conflict (Gross, 1998, 2015).

Emotion regulation strategies, both behavioral and cognitive (Garnefski et al., 2001; Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019), can be used to upregulate, downregulate, or maintain desired emotions (Koole, 2009). Some examples of emotion regulation strategies include rumination (focusing on thoughts related to a negative event), reappraisal (reframing a negative event as more benign or positive), seeking distraction, and seeking social support (Garnefski et al., 2001). The effectiveness of different emotion regulation strategies depends heavily on context (Aldao et al., 2010; Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). Still, depending on the long-term consequences of using a technique habitually, emotion regulation strategies can be categorized as generally more adaptive or maladaptive. The use of maladaptive strategies (e.g., avoidance, rumination, catastrophizing) tends to predict immediate and long-term negative outcomes such as greater depression, anxiety, stress, and anger (Martin & Dahlen, 2005), while adaptive strategies (e.g., positive reappraisal, problem solving) tend to predict the absence of such negative outcomes (Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2010). The habitual use of maladaptive strategies can impact

personal and relational health (Aldao et al., 2010; Gross & John, 2003). Since social context and individual differences are two predictors that have been shown to influence emotion regulation, clarifying their role in predicting maladaptive strategy use is essential in future prevention and intervention (Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012; Gross, 1998; Gross & John, 2003; Hughes et al., 2020; Tang & Huang, 2019).

Relationship Factors

Relationship factors, or social context, can be defined in two different ways. First is the type of relationship that an individual has a conflict in (romantic relationships v. friendships). These two relationship types differ in important ways that could lead to differences in emotion regulation (Lindsey, 2020). For instance, both friendships and romantic relationships are associated with commitment and affiliation (Gonzaga et al., 2001). However, romantic relationships tend to allow for more expression of conflict (Kochendorfer & Kerns, 2020), as they tend to include more aggression (Goldstein, 2011), jealousy (Aune & Comstock, 1991), self-disclosure (Kito, 2005), and passion (Sumter et al., 2013). Furthermore, individuals in romantic relationships have higher expectations of emotional closeness, social companionship, and relationship positivity for their romantic partner than for a friend (Fuhrman et al., 2009). Since romantic relationships tend to bring about more negative emotional expression (aggression, jealousy, conflict), it seems likely that people would report different emotion regulation strategy use compared to people in different types of relationships (i.e., friendships).

Second, relationship factors besides type could predict emotion regulation strategy use following relationship conflict. Past literature suggests that relationship factors (intimacy, relationship quality, satisfaction, and closeness) could predict affective processes such as experiencing emotion, expressing emotion, and regulating emotion (Farrell et al., 2018). For

instance, greater perceived availability of social support is related to better health outcomes (Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015), but spending time with an ambivalent friendship before a stressor is related to worse health outcomes (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2007). Being in a romantic relationship is associated with more adaptive emotion regulation, but this association is moderated by relationship intimacy and trust (Marroquín & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015). Greater conflict frequency is associated with a greater presence of coercive conflict (Laursen & Hafen, 2010). Greater relationship satisfaction is associated with higher perspective taking, lower expressive suppression, and lower aggression during a conflict (Vater & Schröder-Abé, 2015). Greater relationship importance and closeness predicts higher relationship quality (Ross et al., 2019). Finally, the greater a person perceives others as invalidating their emotions, the lower their positive daily affect (Schreiber & Veilleux, 2022; Zielinski & Veilleux, 2018). Past research has examined the ways that reactions to conflict, health outcomes, and relationship outcomes are related to singular relationship factors (conflict frequency, relationship satisfaction, importance, closeness, and a partner's emotion invalidation). However, it is unknown which relationship factors are most predictive of regulation strategies following conflict and how these factors could interact with self-criticism to predict regulation strategies.

Self-Criticism

Individual differences are linked to differences in emotion regulation strategy use (Hughes et al., 2020). One such individual difference, self-criticism, is the psychological tendency to emphasize negative aspects of one's self-concept, habits, skills, abilities, and feedback received from others (Sedikides & Michelle, 2008). It involves the continuous self-comparison of how one is "living up" to external or internal standards (Thompson & Zuroff, 2004). At lower levels, self-criticism (or self-reflection) can be adaptive, prompting someone to

obtain a more accurate sense of self, clarify future goals, and pursue self-improvement (Sedikides & Michelle, 2008). However, at higher levels, self-criticism predicts greater negative affect, maladaptive coping, depression, anxiety, and a greater presence of eating disorders (Dunkley et al., 2003; Werner et al., 2019). Interpersonally, self-criticism has been cited in the attachment theory literature as being correlated with anxious and avoidant attachment (Cantazaro & Wei, 2010; De Santis et al., 2021; Martins et al., 2015), reduced peer-reported need satisfaction (Lear et al., 2020), elevated hostility and other blame in conflict resolution, and increased frequency of negative interpersonal events (Holm-Denoma et al., 2008; Zuroff & Duncan, 1999).

Furthermore, self-criticism also predicts stress responses. Compared to those with lower self-criticism, those with higher self-criticism tend to perceive stressors as more threatening (Schneider, 2004). Those with greater self-critical perfectionism tend to magnify negative aspects of events (Dunkley et al., 2003), use less engagement strategies following stress (Dunkley et al., 2003, 2014), and engage in more avoidant, maladaptive, and emotion-focused coping compared to those with lower self-critical perfectionism (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000). Because of these responses, it seems likely that people with high self-criticism would engage in more maladaptive emotion regulation strategies.

A Potential Interaction

Past research has examined how people high in self-criticism handle conflict within romantic relationships. Within the context of heterosexual, romantic relationships, people high in self-criticism blamed their partners more, were more disruptive to cooperation, and were more disagreeable than participants lower in self-criticism (Santor et al., 2000). Other research examining conflict in heterosexual, romantic couples found that higher self-criticism was

associated with more negative cognitive-affective reactions and more hostility (Zuroff & Duncan, 1999). This research did not examine whether these reactions varied between relationship type, but it seems possible that self-criticism and relationship factors could interact to predict emotion regulation use.

First, situations deemed as more "important" or as more "challenging" can generate more negative emotions (Gross, 1998, 2015). Second, people in romantic relationships have higher expectations for romantic partners than for friends (Fuhrman et al., 2009). Third, people with greater self-criticism habitually use more maladaptive and emotion-focused coping in response to strong emotion (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000). With these premises, it follows that the greatest use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies could occur for participants high in self-criticism and reporting conflict in a romantic relationship.

Current Studies

In two studies, we aimed to explore the main effects of relationship factors and self-criticism on emotion regulation and the interactions between relationship factors and internalized self-criticism on emotion regulation strategies. In both studies, participants rated their level of self-criticism. In Study 1, we randomly assigned participants to write about a conflict in either a romantic relationship or a friendship, and then they rated the emotion regulation techniques they used after the conflict. We predicted that the highest level of maladaptive strategy use would occur for participants high in self-criticism and in romantic relationships. In Study 2, participants were asked to narrate a past relationship conflict, but instead of assigning people to talk about a specific relationship type, we measured different relationship factors (e.g., relationship importance, relationship satisfaction, comfort with vulnerability, closeness, conflict frequency, and perceived partner invalidation). We hypothesized that self-criticism would be associated

with greater maladaptive strategy use, and participants who report greater partner importance, closeness, satisfaction, and emotional vulnerability would report lower maladaptive emotion regulation.

Study 1

This study examined the effect of trait self-criticism and relationship context (romantic v. friendship) on the use of emotion regulation strategies in response to interpersonal conflict. We hypothesized that (1) greater self-criticism would be associated with greater self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, and lower rates of positive reappraisal, (2) the romantic relationship condition would be associated with greater positive reappraisal, refocusing on planning, and other blame, and (3) internalized self-criticism would moderate the relationship between relationship type and emotion regulation, where the greatest use of maladaptive emotion regulation (e.g., self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing) would be for participants high in self-criticism and in romantic relationships. All methods and analyses used were preregistered in the Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/etm4p/).

Methods

Participants

A total of 318 adults participated in this study. Participants were recruited from both Prolific, an online recruitment platform (n = 151), and the University of Arkansas subject pool (n = 167). Prolific participants were compensated at a rate of $9/hr, and University of Arkansas subject pool participants were compensated with partial course credit. Participants (n = 58) were excluded from the analyses for failing at least one attention check item embedded in two self-report measures (n = 45) and for telling us they did not want us to keep their data (n = 13).

The final sample (n = 260) had a mean age of 26.79 (SD = 11.83); 59.2% (n = 154) of the sample identified as female, with 1.9% identifying as nonbinary (n = 5); 73.1% (n = 190) of the overall sample identified as white; and 77.7% (n = 202) identified as straight or heterosexual. Regarding marital status, 77.7% (n = 202) of the sample reported they were never married; 18.1% (n = 47) reported they were married; and 3.5% (n = 9) reported they were separated or divorced.

There were no significant differences in gender percentage based on sample (χ^2= .11, p = .75). However, participants from the Prolific sample were significantly older (M = 32.76, SD = 13.11) than people from the subject pool (M = 19.66, SD = 2.98, t (257) = 10.62, p < .001). Participants from the subject pool (81.5%, n = 97) identified as white significantly more than Prolific participants (66%, n = 190, χ^2 = 7.94, p = .01). Lastly, participants from the subject pool (89.1%, n =106) sample identified as heterosexual significantly more than Prolific participants (68.1%, n = 96, χ^2 = 16.41, p < .001).

Per our OSF pre-registration, we randomized participants to a romantic relationship condition and a friendship condition to test the differences of emotion regulation between relationship type. Individuals were eligible to be randomly assigned if they reported having a romantic relationship and a friendship in the past 5 years. In addition to those excluded for failing attention checks, 83 participants were excluded from the main analyses for indicating a lack of a romantic partner in the past five years (n = 68) and for indicating a lack of a nonromantic friend in the past five years (n = 15).

The participants included in our main analyses (n = 177) had a mean age of 26.73 (SD = 11.36); 58.8% (n = 104) of the sample identified as female, with 1.7% identifying as nonbinary (n = 3); 76.8% (n = 136) of the overall sample identified as white; and 76.8% (n = 136) identified

as straight or heterosexual. Regarding marital status, 74.6% (n = 132) of the randomized sample reported they were never married, 22% (n = 39) reported they were married, and 3.4% (n = 6) reported they were separated or divorced.

Measures

Cognitive Emotion Regulation. The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski et al., 2001) is a 36-item self-report scale measuring cognitive emotion regulation strategies people use in the face of negative life events. We revised the original items so they would refer to strategy use following the narrated conflict rather than to a generic pattern of strategy use (see Appendix A for revisions). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*) with higher scores indicating more frequent engagement in the specified emotion regulation strategy. The questionnaire consisted of nine subscales with good reliability in this sample: self-blame (thoughts of blaming yourself for the experience, α = .87), rumination (focusing on feelings and thoughts associated with a negative event, α = .72), catastrophizing (thoughts that emphasize the terror of an experience, α = .73), other blame (thoughts of blaming others for the experience α = .93), acceptance (thoughts of accepting what you have experienced and resigning yourself to what has happened, α = .73), positive refocusing (thoughts of pleasant issues rather than the actual event, α = .81), refocusing on planning (thoughts of how to handle a negative event, α = .73), positive reappraisal (thoughts of attaching a positive meaning to an event, α = .76), and putting into perspective (thoughts of playing down the seriousness of the event, α = .69). Past studies have found that the CERQ subscales of self-blame, rumination, and catastrophizing were maladaptive in nature, being associated with higher negative emotion or depression (Garnefski et al., 2001; Martin & Dahlen,

2005). Positive refocusing and positive reappraisal were viewed as adaptive, being negatively correlated with depressive symptoms after controlling for other strategies.

Behavioral Emotion Regulation. The Behavioral Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (BERQ; Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019) is a 20-item self-report scale measuring behavioral emotion regulation strategies participants could use in response to negative life events. We revised the original items so they would refer to strategy use following the narrated conflict rather than to a generic pattern of strategy use (see Appendix B for revisions). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*) with higher scores indicating more frequent use of the specified emotion regulation strategy. The questionnaire consists of five subscales with good reliability in this sample: seeking distraction (distracting self from emotions by doing something else, $\alpha = .78$), withdrawal (drawing back from situations and social contacts, $\alpha = .90$), actively approaching (active behavior to deal with stressful event, $\alpha = .81$), seeking social support (sharing emotions and asking for support from others, $\alpha = .88$), and ignoring (ignoring and behaving like nothing happened, $\alpha = .85$). Due to being related to greater depression and anxiety, the subscales of withdrawal and ignoring were viewed as maladaptive in past research (Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019). Relating to fewer depression and anxiety symptoms, the subscales of active approaching and seeking social support were viewed as adaptive in past research.

Self-Criticism. The Levels of Self Criticism Scale (LOSC; Thompson & Zuroff, 2004) was used to assess participants' levels of negative self-evaluation with two subscales. Internalized self-criticism (ISC) measures the negative view of self in comparison with personal standards, and comparative self-criticism (CSC) measures the negative view of self in comparison with others. The LOSC is a 22-item measure administered on a 7-point Likert-type

scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 *(very well*) with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-criticism. The ISC subscale (α = .91), the CSC subscale (α = .70), and the total LOSC score (α = .87) all demonstrated good reliability in the sample.

After Conflict Emotions. To measure negative emotions following the conflict that they were asked to narrate, we compiled adjectives assessing a variety of negative emotions. The Tolerance of Negative Affect States scale was used as inspiration since it includes items from a wide range of negative emotion categories including socially focused emotions (TNAS; Bernstein & Brantz, 2013); the adjectives on the TNAS are consistent with other adjective-based emotional inventories (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994). Two items were selected from the TNAS subscales of Sadness-Depression (sad, depressed), Anger (angry, mad), Disgust (disgusted, repulsed), Anxious-Apprehension (nervous, ashamed), and Negative Social Emotions (guilty, regret). All items were administered on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*extremely*) with higher scores indicating greater negative emotion following the narrated conflict (see Appendix C). This self-report measure demonstrated good reliability in this sample (α = .83).

Procedure

This study was administered via Qualtrics. After providing consent, participants were asked to complete the self-criticism measure (Thompson & Zuroff, 2004). Participants were then asked whether they had been in a "committed, romantic relationship" or a "close friendship with someone who is not a romantic partner or family member" in the past five years. Those who indicated having both types of relationships in the past 5 years were randomly assigned to think about a committed romantic partner or a close friendship while completing the remainder of the study. Any participants who did not have both romantic relationship and a friendship were asked

to think about a relationship they had indicated having (a romantic relationship, a close friendship, or an important person in their life). Data for participants not randomly assigned was only included in exploratory analyses.

After random assignment, participants were asked to write about a past conflict with a person in their condition (romantic relationship or friendship). They were asked to describe what was said and done during the conflict; rate how strong their emotions were immediately following the conflict from 1 (*not strong at all*) to 5 (*extremely strong*); and complete the After Conflict Emotion measure. Participants were then prompted to complete the modified CERQ (Garnefski et al., 2001) and the modified BERQ (Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019) while thinking about how they responded to the conflict they wrote about.

Information about the specific relationship was then collected. On a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*), participants were asked about to rate the how much the conflict impaired the relationship, how the conflict strengthened the relationship, the importance of the relationship at the time of the conflict, and the emotional closeness of the participant to this relationship. All participants were asked how long ago the conflict occurred (*less than 2 months, 2 – 6 months, 6 months – 1 year, 1 year – 3 years, 3 – 5 years, 5+ years*), how long the relationship had been established at the point of the conflict (same response options as the previous item), and the gender of the conflict partner (*same gender as you, opposite gender as you, neither option applies*). In the romantic relationship condition, participants were asked about exclusivity (*no, yes*) and the relationship status they had with their conflict partner *(dating, engaged, married, ex-partner, casual/sexual partner, none of these apply)*. In the friendship condition, participants were asked whether their friend was a family member *(no, yes)*, how romantically attracted they were to their conflict partner from 1 (*not romantically attracted*) to 4 (*very romantically*

attracted), and whether the participant and the conflict partner had any intimate, physical relations at the time of the conflict (*no, yes*). Lastly, all participants provided demographic information on age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, education level, college enrollment, and race/ethnicity.

Data Analytic Strategy

First, independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine between-condition differences (romantic relationship v. friendship) of relationship factors (relationship length, relationship importance, closeness, emotion strength post-conflict, negative emotion post-conflict, the amount the conflict impaired the relationship, and the amount the conflict strengthened the relationship). Bivariate correlations were conducted between the emotion regulation subscales, relationship type condition, self-criticism (overall, internal, and comparative self-criticism), and negative emotion following conflict. Independent samples t-tests were performed to examine the different uses of emotion regulation in the different conditions (romantic relationship v. friendship). Using PROCESS in SPSS (Hayes, 2013), moderated regression analyses were conducted to show the moderating effects of condition and internalized self-criticism on fourteen emotion regulation strategies, and the same analysis was repeated to control for negative emotion.

In our exploratory analyses, there was no random assignment since we were not examining condition (romantic relationship v. friendship), so we included our entire sample (only excluding for attention). Bivariate correlations were conducted between the emotion regulation subscales, relationship importance, impairment of relationship post-conflict, and strengthening of relationship post-conflict. Lastly, a multiple linear regression was performed to examine the unique effects of relationship importance/closeness, self-criticism, and negative

emotion on emotion regulation strategies. Damage and benefit of the conflict to the relationship were not included in the multiple linear regression since they could be interpreted as effects of regulation strategy use rather than predictors of regulation strategy use.

Results

After exclusion and random assignment, 49.7% (n = 88) of participants described a conflict with a friend, and 50.3% (n = 89) of participants described a romantic relationship. In the romantic relationship condition, 68.5% (n = 61) of participants reported a conflict in a dating relationship, 18% (n = 16) in a marriage, 6.7% (n = 6) in an engagement, 2.2% (n = 2) with an ex-partner, and 1.1% (n = 1) with a casual, sexual partner. A large majority of participants in the romantic relationship condition (92.1%, n = 82) reported that their reported relationship was exclusive at the time of the conflict. In the friendship condition, 94.3% (n = 83) of participants described a non-family member, 92% (n = 81) reported no romantic attraction with their conflict partner, and 93.2% (n = 82) participants reported never having intimate or physical relations with their conflict partner at the point of the conflict.

More participants in the friendship condition reported a same-gender conflict partner (76%, n = 67) compared to the romantic relationship condition (1.1%, n = 1, χ^2= 105.39, p <.001). At the point of the conflict, relationships in the friendship condition (Median = 3-5 years) had been established longer than relationships in the romantic relationship condition (Median = 1-3 years). Regarding the relationship factors, participants in the romantic relationship condition reported greater relationship importance, greater closeness, greater emotion strength, and greater negative emotion following the conflict compared to those in the friendship condition (Table 1). There were no differences between conditions in terms of how much the conflict impaired or strengthened the relationship.

Table 1. *Differences in relationship factors and emotional response between conditions*

Variable	Friendship *M* (*SD)*	Romantic Relationship *M* (*SD*)	*t*	*p*
Rel. Length	4.80 (1.35)	3.90 (1.42)	**4.31**	**<.001**
Importance	3.92 (1.13)	4.51 (.84)	**-3.92**	**<.001**
Closeness	4.03 (1.00)	4.56 (.81)	**-3.86**	**<.001**
Emotion Strength	3.61 (1.06)	4.00 (.94)	**-2.57**	**.01**
Negative Emotion	2.76 (1.05)	3.25 (1.13)	**-2.98**	**.003**
Conflict Strengthened	1.93 (1.14)	1.97 (1.15)	-.20	.84
Conflict Impaired	2.67 (1.41)	3.00 (1.57)	-1.47	.14

Correlations

Correlations between regulation strategies, self-criticism, and negative emotion are presented in Table 2 (intercorrelations among the regulation strategies are presented in supplemental Table A). Greater internalized self-criticism was associated with greater maladaptive cognitive regulation (rumination, catastrophizing, other blame) and greater avoidance strategies (seeking distraction, withdrawal ignoring). Greater internalized self-criticism was also associated with greater refocusing on planning and acceptance.

Higher negative emotion following the conflict was significantly associated with greater use of most of the regulation strategies (self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, other blame, seeking distraction, withdrawal, ignoring, seeking social support, and acceptance). However, greater negative emotion was associated with significantly less engagement in positive reappraisal and putting into perspective.

Table 2. *Correlations of emotion regulation with self-criticism and negative emotion*

	Variable	Overall Self-Criticism	Internalized Self-Criticism	Comparative Self-Criticism	Negative Emotion Following Conflict
CERQ					
	Self-Blame	.12	.12	.09	.24**
	Rumination	.37**	.43**	.18*	.52**
	Catastrophizing	.20**	.20**	.15*	.53**
	Other Blame	.14	.20**	.02	.17*
	Positive Reappraisal	-.05	.01	-.11	-.19*
	Refocus on Planning	.08	.17*	-.06	.07
	Acceptance	.23**	.26**	.11	.27**
	Positive Refocusing	-.02	.04	-.09	.04
	Put into Perspective	.00	.08	-.11	-.20**
BERQ					
	Seeking Distraction	.14	.20**	.01	.17*
	Withdrawal	.34**	.36**	.20**	.49**
	Ignoring	.20**	.20**	.12	.30**
	Actively Approaching	-.03	.01	-.07	-.05
	Seek Social Support	.08	.11	.02	.20**

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

Differences Between Conditions

Independent samples t-tests comparing regulation strategies by relationship condition are presented in Table 3. Participants in the romantic relationship condition engaged in more rumination, more refocusing on planning, and more withdrawal compared to participants in the friendship condition. However, the differences between the conditions are small, and they would not be significant with a $p < .01$ threshold for significance.

Table 3. *Differences in regulation strategies following conflict based on relationship type.*

	Variable	Friendship *M* (*SD*)	Romantic Relationship *M* (*SD*)	*t*	*p*
CERQ					
	Self-Blame	10.59 (4.76)	11.65 (4.69)	1.49	.14
	Rumination	12.92 (4.04)	14.17 (3.72)	**2.14**	**.03**
	Catastrophizing	9.02 (3.83)	9.81 (3.93)	1.35	.18
	Other Blame	13.24 (5.09)	13.04 (5.00)	.26	.80
	Positive Reappraisal	12.67 (3.84)	12.56 (3.82)	.19	.85
	Refocusing on Planning	13.52 (3.19)	14.57 (3.62)	**2.05**	**.04**
	Acceptance	13.92 (3.28)	13.95 (3.81)	.07	.95
	Positive Refocusing	9.07 (3.74)	9.52 (3.64)	.81	.42
	Putting into Perspective	13.49 (3.87)	13.06 (3.76)	.75	.45
BERQ					
	Seeking Distraction	12.90 (3.70)	12.90 (4.09)	.002	.998
	Withdrawal	9.40 (4.63)	11.12 (5.02)	**2.38**	**.02**
	Ignoring	9.47 (4.21)	9.54 (4.11)	.12	.91
	Actively Approaching	13.14 (3.66)	13.27 (3.88)	.24	.81
	Seeking Social Support	13.18 (4.85)	12.27 (5.12)	1.22	.23

Moderated regressions examining the effects of condition and internalized self-criticism on emotion regulation are presented in Table 4. Only one strategy was significantly predicted by condition with internalized self-criticism in the model; participants in the romantic relationship condition engaged in more withdrawal than those in the friendship condition. Contrary to our hypotheses, there were no self-criticism x condition interactions on emotion regulation strategies. Also contrary to our hypotheses, condition did not significantly predict any of the emotion regulation strategies when after-conflict negative emotion was controlled for (Table 5).

Table 4. *Moderating effects of condition and internalized self-criticism on emotion regulation use*

	Variable	Condition (Friend = 0; Romantic = 1) *B* (*SE*)	Internalized Self-Criticism *B* (*SE*)	Self-Criticism x Condition *B* (*SE*)
CERQ				
	Self-Blame	.99 (.71)	.42 (.30)	-.40 (.59)
	Rumination	1.01 (.53)	1.40 (.22)***	-.25 (.44)
	Catastrophizing	.68 (.58)	.61 (.24)*	-.23 (.48)
	Other Blame	-.34 (.75)	.84 (.31)**	.28 (.62)
	Positive Reappraisal	-.11 (.58)	.02 (.24)	.65 (.48)
	Refocusing on Planning	.97 (.51)	.45 (.21)*	.26 (.43)
	Acceptance	-.10 (.52)	.78 (.22)***	-.23 (.43)
	Positive Refocusing	.43 (.56)	.12 (.23)	-.22 (.47)
	Putting into Perspective	-.48 (.58)	.28 (.24)	.41 (.48)
BERQ				
	Seeking Distraction	-.12 (.58)	.66 (.24)**	-.24 (.48)
	Withdrawal	1.47 (.68)*	1.43 (.29)***	-.08 (.57)
	Ignoring	-.05 (.62)	.70 (.26) **	.15 (.51)
	Actively Approaching	.13 (.57)	.03 (.24)	.39 (.48)
	Seeking Social Support	-1.00 (.75)	.50 (.31)	-.83 (.62)

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

Table 5. *Moderating effects of condition and internalized self-criticism emotion on emotion regulation use controlling for negative emotion*

	Variable	Condition (Friend = 0; Romantic= 1) *B* (*SE*)	Internalized Self-Criticism *B* (*SE*)	Int. Self-Criticism x Condition *B* (*SE*)	Negative Emotion *B* (*SE*)
CERQ					
	Self-Blame	.59 (.71)	.17 (.31)	-.26 (.59)	.89 (.34)**
	Rumination	.37 (.49)	.95 (.21)***	-.02 (.41)	1.45 (.23)***
	Catastrophizing	-.12 (.51)	.10 (.22)	.05 (.42)	1.83 (.24)***
	Other Blame	-.60 (.76)	.67 (.33)*	.37 (.62)	.59 (.36)
	Positive Reappraisal	.21 (.58)	.22 (.25)	.53 (.48)	-.73 (.28)**
	Refocus on Planning	.99 (.52)	.45 (.22)*	.26 (.43)	-.03 (.25)
	Acceptance	-.41 (.52)	.58 (.22)**	-.12 (.43)	.70 (.25)**
	Positive Refocusing	.40 (.57)	.11 (.25)	-.21 (.47)	.05 (.27)
	Put into Perspective	-.11 (.57)	.52 (.24)*	.27 (.47)	-.84 (.27)**
BERQ					
	Seeking Distraction	-.31 (.59)	.53 (.25)*	-.17 (.48)	.45 (.28)
	Withdrawal	.69 (.64)	.93 (.27)***	.20 (.52)	1.79 (.30)***
	Ignoring	-.51 (.61)	.40 (.26)	.31 (.50)	1.05 (.29)***
	Active Approach	.21 (.58)	.08 (.25)	.36 (.48)	-.19 (.28)
	Seek Social Support	-1.41 (.75)	.23 (.32)	-.69 (.62)	.93 (.36)**

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

Exploratory Analyses

The Partner Importance/Closeness variable was created by averaging values for perceived partner importance and closeness (α = .80). Greater partner importance/closeness was associated with greater rumination and lower positive refocusing (Table 6). Greater perception that the conflict impaired the relationship was related to more maladaptive strategies (decreased putting into perspective and greater rumination, catastrophizing, other blame, acceptance, seeking distraction, withdrawal, ignoring, and seeking social support). Greater perception that the conflict benefitted the relationship was related to more adaptive strategies (greater active approaching, greater self-blame, and lower rumination, catastrophizing, other blame, acceptance, seeking distraction, withdrawal, and ignoring). Finally, greater relationship importance/closeness uniquely predicted greater rumination, lower distraction seeking, and lower ignoring when self-criticism and negative emotion were controlled for (Table 7*)*.

Table 6. *Correlations of emotion regulation with relationship factors*

Variable		Importance/ Closeness	Damage of Conflict to Relationship	Benefit of Conflict to Relationship
CERQ				
	Self-Blame	.12	-.06	.20**
	Rumination	.24**	.38**	-.18*
	Catastrophizing	.02	.49**	-.31**
	Other Blame	-.07	.34**	-.39**
	Positive Reappraisal	-.04	-.10	.20**
	Refocusing on Planning	.06	-.01	.09
	Acceptance	.03	.38**	-.25**
	Positive Refocusing	-.17*	.08	-.10
	Putting into Perspective	-.08	-.17*	.08
BERQ				
	Seeking Distraction	-.11	.37**	-.32**
	Withdrawal	.07	.34**	-.24**
	Ignoring	-.12	.21**	-.25**
	Actively Approaching	.12	-.09	.23**
	Seeking Social Support	.13	.31**	-.15

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

Table 7. *Multiple regression analysis of emotion regulation with relationship factors*

	Variable	Importance/ Closeness *B* (*SE*)	Overall Self-Criticism *B* (*SE*)	Negative Emotion *B* (*SE*)	R^2
CERQ					
	Self-Blame	.36 (.32)	.38 (.34)	.96 (.27)***	.08***
	Rumination	.46 (.23)*	.80 (.25)***	1.50 (.20)***	.30***
	Catastrophizing	-.35 (.23)	.30 (.25)	1.84 (.20)***	.29***
	Other Blame	-.57 (.35)	.59 (.38)	.72 (.30)*	.05**
	Pos. Reappraisal	.11 (.28)	-.06 (.30)	-.44 (.24)	.02
	Focus on Planning	.35 (.25)	.13 (.27)	.19 (.21)	.02
	Acceptance	-.12 (.25)	.57 (.27)*	.75 (.21)***	.09***
	Pos. Refocusing	-.60 (.27)*	.12 (.29)	.11 (.23)	.02
	Put in Perspective	-.15 (.27)	.43 (.29)	-.63 (.23)**	.03*
BERQ					
	Seeking Distraction	-.66 (.27)*	.59 (.29)*	.70 (.23)**	.08***
	Withdrawal	-.23 (.30)	1.52 (.32)***	1.65 (.26)***	.26***
	Ignoring	-1.03 (.29)***	.89 (.31)**	1.06 (.25)***	.14***
	Active Approach	.52 (.28)	-.23 (.30)	-.13 (.24)	.02
	Social Support	.46 (.35)	-.11 (.37)	1.20 (.30)***	.08***

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

Discussion

In Study 1, we aimed to examine the effects of relationship type and self-criticism on emotion regulation and to examine potential interactions between condition and self-criticism on regulation use. Our prediction that greater self-criticism would be associated with greater maladaptive strategies was supported. After controlling for negative emotion, higher self-criticism was predictive of more rumination, acceptance, seeking distraction, withdrawal, and ignoring, and higher internalized self-criticism was also predictive of more other blame.

Within the original publications for the CERQ and the BERQ, the subscales of acceptance and seeking distraction are categorized as adaptive (Garnefski et al., 2001; Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019), but our findings suggest that these subscales could be acting maladaptively in our sample. Throughout our results, greater acceptance and seeking distraction subscales are associated with greater self-criticism, greater damage to the relationship, and reduced benefit to the relationship after the conflict. Furthermore, both subscales are positively correlated with the maladaptive subscales of rumination, catastrophizing, withdrawal, and ignoring (see

Supplemental Table A). Upon inspection of the subscales, acceptance's items ('I thought that I must learn to live with it' and 'I thought that I could not change anything about it') could potentially be measuring a construct closer to resignation or hopelessness. This observation has also been reported in past research (Ireland et al., 2017; Martin & Dahlen, 2005). Seeking distraction's items ('I set my worries aside by doing something else' and 'I engaged in other, unrelated activities') can be viewed through an experiential avoidance lens, a strategy seen as maladaptive in past literature (Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2010; S. C. Hayes et al., 2006). Because of the results described above and support from past literature, we suggest that the acceptance and seeking distraction subscales may be assessing maladaptive tendencies.

Under this assumption, our prediction that self-criticism would be associated with maladaptive emotion regulation strategies was supported. Our other hypotheses were not supported. After controlling for negative emotion, there were no main effects of relationship type and no interactions between self-criticism and relationship type. In the independent samples t-test, participants in the romantic relationship condition reported greater rumination, refocusing on planning, and withdrawal. However, our results suggested that greater negative emotion was underlying any significant differences of emotion regulation use between romantic relationships and friendships. Because there were not any significant main effects of relationship condition on regulation strategy use when negative emotion was controlled for, self-criticism could not moderate any effects of relationship type.

Nevertheless, in our exploratory analyses, we see that greater relationship importance/closeness does uniquely predict greater rumination, reduced distraction seeking, and reduced ignoring even when we control for negative emotion. This finding suggests that relationship factors apart from relationship type could predict emotion regulation strategy use. In

Study 2, we planned to shift our focus to examine the effects between other relationship factors, self-criticism, and negative emotion after relationship conflict. Due to the uncertainty discussed surrounding some CERQ and BERQ subscale validity and the length of the measure, we decided to shift our measurement of regulation strategy use in Study 2.

Study 2

This study examined the effects of trait self-criticism and relationship factors on the use of emotion regulation strategies in response to interpersonal conflict. We hypothesized that (1) negative emotion would be positively associated with all strategies; (2) self-criticism would be positively associated with maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (rumination, catastrophizing, avoidance, blaming, withdrawal); (3) partner importance, closeness, satisfaction, and emotional vulnerability would be negatively associated with maladaptive strategies and positively associated with cognitive strategies; (4) self-criticism would moderate the effects of relationship factors on maladaptive strategies; and (5) negative emotion would mediate the effects of relationship importance on regulation strategies. All methods and analyses used were preregistered in the Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/6ut2e/)

Methods

Participants

A total of 433 adults participated in this study, 131 from Prolific and 302 from the University of Arkansas subject pool. Prolific participants were compensated at a rate of $9/hr, and University of Arkansas subject pool participants were compensated with partial course credit. Of those who completed the study, 118 were excluded from the analyses for failing at least one attention check (n = 106) or for telling us they did not want us to keep their data (n = 28).

Thus, the final sample (n = 315) had a mean age of 24.30 (SD = 10.90); 61% (n = 192) of the sample identified as female and 1.3% identified as nonbinary (n = 4); 77.5% (n = 244) of the overall sample identified as white; and 80.3% (n = 253) identified as straight or heterosexual. Regarding marital status, 83.5% (n = 263) of the sample reported they were never married; 11.4% (n = 36) reported they were married; and 5.1% (n = 16) reported they were separated or divorced.

There were no significant sample differences of gender identity (χ^2= 3.57, p = .06). However, participants from the prolific sample were significantly older (M = 33.85, SD = 13.54) than people from the subject pool (M = 18.88, SD = 1.24, t (313) = 15.58, p < .001). Significantly more subject pool participants identified as white (84.1%, n = 169) than Prolific participants (65.8%, n = 75, χ^2 = 13.94, p < .001). Last, participants from the subject pool (85.6%, n = 172) identified as heterosexual significantly more than Prolific participants (71.1%, n = 81, χ^2 = 9.70, p = .002).

Measures

Emotion Regulation. To measure cognitive and behavioral emotion regulation strategies in Study 2, we compiled 18 items by revising or taking inspiration from the items in the State Emotion Regulation Inventory (SERI; Katz et al., 2017), the CERQ (Garnefski et al., 2001), and the BERQ (Kraaij & Garnefski, 2019). Items were administered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*) with higher scores indicating greater use of the corresponding strategy, participants were asked to rate the "degree to which you did the following things or had the following thoughts during and following the conflict you wrote about." See Appendix C for full list of items.

Self-Criticism. The Levels of Self Criticism Scale (LOSC; Thompson & Zuroff, 2004) was administered in Study 2, same as in Study 1. The LOSC demonstrated good reliability in this sample (α = .87).

After Conflict Emotions. The same measure of after-conflict emotions from Study 1 was utilized in Study 2, but two additional items were included from the TNAS subscale of Fear-Distress (fearful, anxious) (Bernstein & Brantz, 2013). This self-report measure demonstrated good reliability in this sample (α = .89).

Perceived Relationship Closeness. Perceived relationship closeness was measured using the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS; Aron et al., 1992). The IOS is a single-item, pictorial measure of two increasingly overlapping circles measuring perceived closeness or interconnectedness of two subjects. Participants are asked to choose which diagram best represents how close they felt to their conflict partner at the time of the conflict on a scale of 1 *(no circle overlap)* to 7 *(almost complete circle overlap).*

Partner Invalidation. The Perceived Invalidation of Emotion Scale (PIES; Zielinski & Veilleux, 2018) is a 10-item self-report scale measuring perceived emotional invalidation in general, accounting for many different people in the participants' lives. We revised this scale to measure the perceived emotion invalidation of the singular conflict partner reported by the participant in the beginning of the study (See Appendix D for revisions). Items were administered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*) with higher scores indicating greater levels of perceived emotion invalidation from the participant's conflict partner. This self-report measure demonstrated excellent reliability in this sample (α = .94).

Other Relationship Factors. On a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*), participants were asked about to rate how destructive the conflict was to the relationship, how big/severe the conflict was, the importance of the relationship at the time of the conflict, their satisfaction with the relationship at the time of the conflict, how comfortable they were being emotionally vulnerable in the relationship, and how often they were in conflict with their conflict partner in general at this point in time on a scale from 1 *(never)* to 5 *(always)*. All participants were asked to choose the label of their conflict partner (*romantic partner, ex-romantic partner, platonic friend, family member, other*) and to report how long the relationship had been established at the point of the conflict (*less than 6 months, 6 months – 1 year, 1+ year – 3 years, 3+ years – 5 years, 5+ years*).

Procedure

This study was administered via Qualtrics. After providing consent, participants were asked to complete the self-criticism measure (Thompson & Zuroff, 2004). Participants were then asked to think about a close relationship they have had in the past 5 years, and participants were informed that "relationship" could refer to a romantic relationship, a friendship, a familial relationship, etc. Participants were prompted to type the first name of this person, and this name was piped into items and prompts throughout the study. Participants were then prompted to think about their partner and to write about a conflict that had occurred with them. They were asked to describe what was said and done during the conflict, to complete the After-Conflict Emotion measure, and to rate the emotion regulation strategy items.

Information about the specific relationship was then collected. Participants were asked to rate the destructiveness of the conflict, the severity of the conflict, relationship importance, relationship satisfaction, comfort with emotional vulnerability, conflict frequency, and

relationship closeness (Aron et al., 1992). Then, participants were asked to choose the label of their conflict partner (romantic partner, ex-romantic partner, platonic friend, family member, other) and to report how long the relationship had been established at the point of the conflict. Lastly, participants completed the measure of perceived partner emotion invalidation and provided demographic information on age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, education level, college enrollment, and race/ethnicity.

Data Analytic Strategy

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the emotion regulation strategy items to discover relationships among the emotion regulation items and to create subscales for further analysis. Bivariate correlations were conducted between the regulation strategy subscales, between the relationship factor variables, and between the strategy subscales and the relationship factor variables. Using PROCESS in SPSS (Hayes, 2013), moderated regression analyses were conducted to show the moderating effects of self-criticism and relationship factors on emotion regulation strategies. Also using PROCESS in SPSS (Hayes, 2013), mediation analyses were conducted to investigate the mediating effect of negative emotion on the relationships between self-criticism and emotion regulation strategies and the relationships between relationship importance and emotion regulation strategies (see Supplemental Table C and Figures A, B, C, D). Lastly, a multiple linear regression was performed to examine the unique effects of negative emotion, self-criticism, and relationship factors on emotion regulation strategies.

Results

Of the 315 participants retained in analyses, 43.2% (n = 136) of participants reported a conflict with a current romantic partner, 34.3% (n = 108) with a platonic friend, 10.8% (n = 34) with a family member, 7.9% (n = 25) with an ex-romantic partner, and 3.8% (n = 12) with

"other". Concerning the length of the relationship at the point of the conflict, 33.3% (*n* = 105) reported 5+ years, 12.7% (*n* = 40) reported 3+ years – 5 years, 24.1% (*n* = 76) reported 1 + years – 3 years, 16.8% (*n* = 53) reported 6 months – 1 year, and 13% (*n* = 41) reported less than 6 months.

Factor Analysis

We performed a factor analysis on the emotion regulation strategy items, and 4 factors were revealed (see Supplemental Table B). The cognitive focus subscale (α = .67) measured the degree of rumination, catastrophizing, self-blame, and social support used following the conflict. The active blaming subscale (α = .68) measured the amount of self-focus, other blame, lashing out, and shutting down following the conflict. The avoidance subscale (α = .72) measured the amount of mental distraction, ignoring, external distraction, or withdrawal from the conflict. The adaptive subscale (α = .67) measured the amount of acceptance, direct conversation, problem-solving, positive reappraisal, and coping following the conflict. Correlations between the subscales can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. *Intercorrelations of emotion regulation strategies*

	Cognitive Focus	Active Blaming	Avoidance	Adaptive
Cognitive Focus	-			
Active Blaming	.23**	-		
Avoidance	.37**	.35**	-	
Adaptive	.24**	-.22**	-.02	-

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

Correlations

Correlations among relationship variables are presented in Table 9. Higher relationship importance was associated with greater relationship satisfaction, closeness, and vulnerability. Greater relationship satisfaction, closeness, and vulnerability were associated with lower conflict frequency, partner emotion invalidation, and negative emotion after-conflict. Finally, greater

conflict frequency and partner emotion invalidation were associated with greater negative emotion.

Table 9. *Intercorrelations of relationship factors and negative emotion*

	Negative Emotion	Importance	Satisfaction	Closeness	Comfort w/ Vulnerability	Conflict Frequency	Emotion Invalidation
Negative Emotion	-						
Importance	.06	-					
Satisfaction	-.22**	.44**	-				
Closeness	-.11*	.28**	.42**	-			
Comfort with Vulnerability	-.13*	.45**	.60**	.45**	-		
Conflict Frequency	.27**	-.11	-.42**	-.18**	-.20**	-	
Emotion Invalidation	.25**	-.27**	-.45**	-.28**	-.37**	.38**	-

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

Correlations between relationship factors and regulation strategies are presented in Table 10. Greater negative emotion was associated with greater use of all regulation strategies. Greater self-criticism was correlated with lower use of adaptive strategies and greater use of cognitive focus, active blaming, and avoidance. Greater relationship importance was correlated with higher cognitive focus, higher adaptive strategies, reduced active blaming, and reduced avoidance. Greater satisfaction, closeness, and vulnerability were associated with reduced active blaming, reduced avoidance, and greater adaptive strategies, and greater relationship satisfaction was also associated with lower cognitive focus. Finally, greater conflict frequency and perceived partner emotion invalidation was correlated with greater use of cognitive focus, active blaming, and avoidance.

Table 10. *Correlations of relationship factors with regulation strategies*

	Cognitive Focus	Active Blaming	Avoidance	Adaptive
Self-Criticism	.28**	.24**	.30**	-.17**
Negative Emotion	.66**	.23**	.38**	.17**
Importance	.13*	-.20**	-.14*	.23**
Satisfaction	-.19**	-.35**	-.23**	.14*
Closeness	-.05	-.23**	-.18**	.15**
Comfort with Vulnerability	-.06	-.26**	-.21**	.27**
Conflict Frequency	.17**	.25**	.14*	-.03
Emotion Invalidation	.19**	.42**	.26**	-.03

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

Moderating Effects of Self-Criticism

Moderated regressions of relationship factors and self-criticism on regulation strategies are presented in Table 11, and we repeated the same analysis controlling for negative emotion in Table 12. Self-criticism moderated the effects of relationship importance on adaptive strategy use (Table 11). Participants low in self-criticism used more adaptive strategies as relationship importance/closeness increases, but this effect was weaker for participants high in self-criticism. However, when we controlled for negative emotion, self-criticism did not moderate any associations between relationship factors and emotion regulation strategy use (Table 12).

Table 11. *Moderating effects of self-criticism and relationship factors on emotion regulation strategies*

		Outcome Variables			
Concept	Predictors	Cognitive Focus	Active Blaming	Avoidance	Adaptive
Negative Emotion	Neg. Emotion	.57 (.04)***	.13 (.05)**	.27 (.05)***	.18 (.04)***
	Self-Criticism	.04 (.05)	.19 (.06)**	.22 (.06)***	-.24 (.05)***
	Neg. Emotion x Self-Criticism	-.05 (.04)	-.06 (.05)	.02 (.05)	-.02 (.04)
Importance	Importance	.14 (.06)*	-.20 (.05)***	-.15 (.06)**	.18 (.04)***
	Self-Criticism	.33 (.06)**	.27 (.06)***	.35 (.06)***	-.14 (.05)**
	Importance x Self-Criticism	-.12 (.07)	-.03 (.07)	-.09 (.07)	-.12 (.06)*
Satisfaction	Satisfaction	-.11 (.05)*	-.24 (.04)***	-.13 (.04)**	.07 (.04)*
	Self-Criticism	.29 (.07)***	.18 (.06)**	.30 (.06)***	-.12 (.05)*
	Satisfaction x Self-Criticism	-.01 (.05)	.04 (.05)	-.04 (.05)	-.07 (.04)
Comfort with Vulnerability	Vulnerability	.01 (.04)	-.16 (.04)***	-.10 (.04)*	.14 (.03)***
	Self-Criticism	.33 (.07)***	.20 (.06)***	.31 (.06)***	-.09 (.05)
	Vulnerability x Self-Criticism	-.01 (.05)	.05 (.04)	-.03 (.05)	-.04 (.04)
Closeness	Closeness	-.00 (.03)	-.10 (.03)***	-.07 (.03)*	.05 (.02)*
	Self-Criticism	.32 (.06)***	.24 (.06)***	.32 (.06)***	-.14 (.05)**
	Closeness x Self-Criticism	-.04 (.03)	.02 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.02)
Frequency of Conflict	Freq. of Conflict	.14 (.05)**	.20 (.05)***	.10 (.05)*	-.01 (.04)
	Self-Criticism	.31 (.06)***	.23 (.06)***	.34 (.06)***	-.14 (.05)**
	Freq. of Conflict x Self-Criticism	.06 (.06)	-.07 (.06)	.07 (.06)	.07 (.05)
Partner Emotion Invalidation	PIES	.15 (.05)**	.36 (.05)***	.20 (.05)***	-.01 (.04)
	Self-Criticism	.29 (.06)***	.20 (.06)***	.31 (.06)***	-.15 (.05)**
	PIES x Self-Criticism	-.05 (.06)	-.08 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.04 (.04)

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

Table 12. *Moderating effects of self-criticism and relationship factors on emotion regulation strategies controlling for negative emotion*

		Outcome Variables			
Concept	Predictors	Cognitive Focus	Active Blaming	Avoidance	Adaptive
Importance	Negative Emotion	.56 (.04)***	.14 (.05)**	.28 (.05)***	.16 (.04)***
	Importance	.10 (.05)*	-.21 (.05)***	-.17 (.05)**	.17 (.04)***
	Self-Criticism	.05 (.05)	.20 (.06)**	.21 (.06)**	-.22 (.05)***
	Importance x Self-Criticism	-.04 (.06)	-.01 (.07)	-.05 (.07)	-.09 (.05)
Satisfaction	Negative Emotion	.56 (.04)***	.09 (.05)*	.25 (.05)***	.20 (.04)***
	Satisfaction	-.03 (.04)	-.23 (.04)***	-.10 (.04)*	.10 (.04)**
	Self-Criticism	.04 (.05)	.14 (.06)*	.19 (.06)**	-.21 (.05)***
	Satisfaction x Self-Criticism	-.01 (.04)	.04 (.05)	-.04 (.05)	-.07 (.04)
Comfort with Vulnerability	Negative Emotion	.57 (.04)***	.12 (.05)**	.27 (.05)***	.19 (.04)***
	Vulnerability	.03 (.03)	-.15 (.04)***	-.09 (.04)*	.15 (.03)***
	Self-Criticism	.06 (.06)	.14 (.06)*	.18 (.07)**	-.18 (.05)***
	Vulnerability x Self-Criticism	-.01 (.04)	.05 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	-.04 (.03)
Closeness	Negative Emotion	.57 (.04)***	.12 (.05)*	.26 (.05)***	.19 (.04)***
	Closeness	.02 (.02)	-.09 (.03)***	-.06 (.03)*	.06 (.02)**
	Self-Criticism	.05 (.05)	.18 (.06)**	.20 (.06)**	-.23 (.05)***
	Closeness x Self-Criticism	-.04 (.02)	.02 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.02)
Frequency of Conflict	Negative Emotion	.57 (.04)***	.09 (.05)	.26 (.05)***	.19 (.04)***
	Freq. of Conflict	-.01 (.04)	.18 (.05)***	.04 (.05)	-.06 (.04)
	Self-Criticism	.05 (.05)	.19 (.06)**	.22 (.06)***	-.23 (.05)***
	Freq. of Conflict x Self-Criticism	.01 (.05)	-.08 (.06)	.05 (.06)	.05 (.05)
Partner Emotion Invalidation	Negative Emotion	.57 (.04)***	.05 (.05)	.24 (.05)***	.19 (.04)***
	PIES	.02 (.04)	.35 (.05)***	.15 (.05)**	-.05 (.04)
	Self-Criticism	.05 (.05)	.18 (.06)**	.20 (.06)**	-.23 (.05)***
	PIES x Self-Criticism	.02 (.04)	-.08 (.05)	.04 (.05)	.06 (.04)

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

Exploratory Analyses

The multiple hierarchical regression in Table 13 displays which variables (negative emotion, relationship factors, and self-criticism) best predicted the use of emotion regulation strategies after relationship conflict. Greater negative emotion predicted greater use of cognitive

focus, avoidance, and adaptive emotion regulation. Greater self-criticism predicted greater active blaming, greater avoidance, and less adaptive strategies. Greater relationship importance predicted greater use of cognitive focus, but greater relationship satisfaction predicted less cognitive focus. Greater relationship importance and vulnerability predicted greater adaptive strategy use. Greater perceived partner emotional invalidation predicted more active blaming and avoidance.

Table 13. *Multiple linear regression with self-criticism, negative emotion, and relationship factors predicting emotion regulation use*

	Outcome Variables			
Predictors	Cognitive Focus *B* (*SE*)	Active Blaming *B* (*SE*)	Avoidance *B* (*SE*)	Adaptive *B* (*SE*)
Negative Emotion	.55 (.04)***	.06 (.05)	.26 (.05)***	.18 (.04)***
Self-Criticism	.04 (.05)	.16 (.06)**	.19 (.07)**	-.20 (.05)***
Rel. Importance	.15 (.05)**	-.07 (.06)	-.10 (.06)	.12 (.05)*
Rel. Satisfaction	-.12 (.05)*	-.09 (.06)	-.00 (.06)	-.04 (.05)
Vulnerability Comfort	.03 (.04)	.02 (.05)	-.02 (.05)	.12 (.04)**
Conflict Frequency	-.05 (.05)	.04 (.05)	-.03 (.06)	-.05 (.05)
Partner Invalidation	.05 (.05)	.26 (.05)***	.11 (.06)*	.05 (.05)
Degree of Closeness	.02 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)
Total R^2	.46***	.24***	.22***	.17***

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

Discussion

In Study 2, we aimed to examine the effects of relationship factors (beyond relationship type) and self-criticism on emotion regulation and to examine potential interactions between relationship factors and self-criticism on regulation use. Our prediction that greater self-criticism would predict greater maladaptive strategy use (active blaming, avoidance) and lower adaptive strategy use was supported. Negative emotion, another strong predictor of emotion regulation, was correlated with all the regulation strategies and was uniquely predictive of cognitive focus, avoidance, and adaptive strategies.

Relationship factors predicted some regulation use even when negative emotion and self-criticism were controlled for. Relationship satisfaction (predicting reduced cognitive focus) and comfort with vulnerability (predicting increased adaptive strategies) appear to have affected regulation use in a helpful way. Perceived emotion invalidation by a conflict partner (predicting more active blaming and avoidance) appears to have affected regulation use in a harmful way.

Interpreting relationship importance is less clear. It predicted more adaptive strategies, but it predicted more cognitive focus as well, which can function both adaptively and maladaptively (Aldao et al., 2010; Garnefski et al., 2001; Southward et al., 2019). For instance, our cognitive focus subscale includes questions on rumination and catastrophizing, but participants could interpret these same items adaptively, as taking reasonable responsibility or problem solving ('I blamed myself for the mistakes I made during the conflict' or 'I thought about the conflict continuously'). Our results also support the notion that that cognitive focus can be used maladaptively or adaptively since cognitive focus was positively correlated with the maladaptive and adaptive emotion regulation subscales. These results also replicate Study 1 findings, where relationship importance/closeness predicted both maladaptive (increased rumination) and adaptive (reduced ignoring) responses. Finally, contrary to our hypotheses, the relationship factor effects did not differ between varying levels of self-criticism when negative emotion was controlled for.

General Discussion

In this research, we sought to examine the ways in which different relationship factors and self-criticism predict emotion regulation use after relationship conflict. In both studies, we asked participants to complete a self-criticism measure, to narrate a past relationship conflict, and to rate their negative emotion and their emotion regulation strategy use after the conflict. In

Study 1, we focused on relationship type by randomly assigning participants to narrate a conflict in a romantic relationship or a friendship, and in Study 2, we focused on other relationship factors by measuring a wider array of relationship qualities (relationship importance, satisfaction, comfort with vulnerability, conflict frequency, partner emotion invalidation, and relationship closeness). The findings of these studies clarify the role of relationship variables, self-criticism, and negative emotion on the use of emotion regulation strategies after a relationship conflict.

Relationship Factors and Emotion Regulation Strategies

Our findings suggest that the type of relationship a conflict happened in (friendship v. romantic relationship) did not affect the emotion regulation strategies used afterwards. This finding contradicts suggestions in past literature that emotion regulation strategy use could differ between relationship type (Lindsey, 2020). However, this finding is consistent with other literature that suggests the effects of romantic relationships on emotion regulation depend upon relationship qualities like intimacy and trust (Farrell et al., 2018; Marroquín & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015).

Instead of relationship type (friendship v. romantic relationship), the factors and qualities of these relationships were related to strategy use. After controlling for negative emotion and self-criticism, greater comfort with emotional vulnerability in a relationship and greater relationship satisfaction predicted more adaptive strategy use. Inversely, greater perceived emotion invalidation from a relationship partner predicted more maladaptive strategy use. Lastly, greater relationship importance predicted more adaptive strategy use and more cognitive focus, which we suggest can function both adaptively and maladaptively.

Self-Criticism and Emotion Regulation Strategies

Overall, greater self-criticism predicted greater use of maladaptive strategies. After controlling for negative emotion and relationship factors, self-criticism predicted greater use of active blaming, greater avoidance, and lower adaptive strategy use. These findings replicate existing research that suggests people with greater self-criticism respond to conflict with more avoidance and more hostility (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000; Holm-Denoma et al., 2008; Zuroff & Duncan, 1999). Contrary to our predictions, self-criticism was not predictive of self-blame in Study 1 or Study 2 (self-blame is included in the cognitive focus subscale for Study 2). Past research suggests that two types of self-blame exist: behavioral self-blame and characterological self-blame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Behavioral self-blame, related to one's actions and behavior, could correspond to self-blame as measured by the CERQ; Characterological self-blame, related to one's esteem and character, could correspond to self-criticism as measured by the LOSC. Hypothetically, this could be one reason why we see discrepancy between these two variables.

Self-Criticism and Polyregulation

In these results, people with high self-criticism report more lashing out and other blame while also respond with more ignoring and avoidance. Upon first glance, these two responses may seem contradictory, but past research presents a potential explanation: polyregulation. Polyregulation is the use of multiple emotion regulation strategies within a single emotional episode, and past research shows that people tend to use it in 98% of their coping episodes (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Ford et al., 2019). Therefore, polyregulation is the norm in emotion regulation efforts. Using multiple regulation strategies flows from consciously or subconsciously identifying multiple goals or motives to accomplish with these strategies (Ford et al., 2019). For instance, a participant with greater negative emotion could use more cognitive focus to problem-

solve or evaluate a situation and then use adaptive strategies to approach their conflict partner. In this example consistent with our findings, polyregulation and the motives that drive it are complementary. However, motives can also be contradictory, reflecting ambivalence in the regulation process.

In our findings, greater self-criticism was associated with greater active blaming and avoidance. Under the polyregulation model, this result could point toward contradictory motives for people high in self-criticism or ambivalence during the conflict or emotional episode (Ford et al., 2019). Although the use of polyregulation is common regardless of self-criticism level, past research shows that people experiencing more intense emotion are more likely to use more polyregulation (Barrett et al., 2001). Since participants with greater self-criticism also tend to report greater negative emotion in our findings, high self-criticism could prompt greater use of multiple maladaptive strategies simultaneously or subsequently.

Negative Emotion and Emotion Regulation Strategies

Consistent with our hypotheses, participants who reported greater negative emotion after a conflict used more cognitive and behavioral emotion regulation with most of the strategies. Since one significant goal of using emotion regulation is to decrease distress, these findings replicate past research (Gross, 1998; Southward et al., 2019; Tamir, 2016). However, due to correlational data, we cannot claim that negative emotion prompted this regulation use. Although it is possible, this finding could also point to greater negative emotion resulting from greater use of maladaptive strategies.

Contradictory to our hypotheses, greater negative emotion was not related with more use of all regulation strategies. It was associated with lower positive reappraisal and lower putting into perspective. Because the items measuring positive reappraisal ('I look for the positive sides

to the matter ') and putting into perspective ('I think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things') might require participants to downplay or reframe the negative aspects of the situation, we suspect that participants with a high amount of negative emotion would use less of this strategy since it could feel invalidating to their high levels of distress. On the other hand, these results are also correlational, so a greater use of these adaptive strategies could have reduced past negative emotion.

Main Effects of Emotion Regulation Strategies

Relationship factors, self-criticism, and negative emotion all independently predicted emotion regulation strategy use. However, not one variable stands out as the most influential or predictive of regulation use. In the beginning of this project, we expected negative emotion to be the strongest predictor of all regulation strategies. However, different strategies of emotion regulation were better predicted by different variables. For instance, negative emotion strongly predicted cognitive focus, avoidance, and adaptive strategies, but the association between negative emotion and active blaming disappeared when self-criticism and partner invalidation were included in the model. Self-criticism predicted active blaming, avoidance, and adaptive strategies, but the positive association between self-criticism and cognitive focus disappeared when negative emotion was accounted for in the model. Therefore, the categorizations of maladaptive and adaptive might even be too broad when examining which variables predict specific strategies. Future research should be wary of such differences and inspect what variables each strategy is especially sensitive to (e.g., emotional stimuli, individual differences, relationship setting).

Implications for Emotion Regulation Motives

No significant interactions were evident between self-criticism and relationship factors in predicting regulation strategies when we controlled for negative emotion. Still, self-criticism and

relationship factors independently affected emotion regulation strategies. Since these effects are still significant when negative emotion is controlled for, self-criticism and relationship factors could be prompting instrumental motivations for emotion regulation (focused on what is useful) in addition to hedonic motivations (focused on what feels good) (Tamir, 2016). Past research suggests that people with low self-esteem are less motivated to decrease negative emotion than people with higher self-esteem, potentially because the negative emotion verifies their negative self-concept (Wood et al., 2009). People in close relationships can increase sadness to recruit social support or increase anger to subordinate others (Clark et al., 1987; Wei et al., 2005). In addition to causing greater negative emotion that prompts emotion regulation, we suggest increased self-criticism and some relationship factors could predict other motivations for emotion regulation (self-verification and achieving interpersonal goals).

Limitations

First and foremost, limitations revolve around measuring reactions and perspectives from past conflict and relationships. Since we asked participants' to retrospectively narrate a conflict, it is impossible to truly replicate their past thoughts, feelings, emotions, and motivations. Perspectives of the conflicts could now be colored by shifting perspectives of past partners, relationships, and actions (Levine et al., 2009). Therefore, in the present moment, some participants could report different negative emotion and different qualities of the relationship than they experienced during the real-life conflict. Future researchers could combat this problem by using ecological momentary assessment to measure perceptions, emotions, and actions as they happen in the present (Shiffman et al., 2008). Researchers could also perform controlled studies in a laboratory by prompting conflict in existing relationships. This method has been used before

in studies of conflict resolution within romantic relationships (Santor et al., 2000; Zuroff & Duncan, 1999).

Also, when we designed this study, we envisioned participants writing about a singular conflict in a relationship and how they responded to that singular emotional episode. Many participants wrote about a singular emotional episode: losing a game, hearing an inappropriate comment, or being late to an event. However, many participants also wrote about ongoing conflicts that involved multiple emotional episodes throughout time. For instance, participants reported conflicts about religious differences, patterns of lying in relationships, long-distance relationship communication, political differences, and infidelity. Rather than studying the complexities of a singular emotional episode, reactions to these conflicts could also be affected by a variety of other factors not accounted for in our study. Therefore, it is more difficult to generalize our results because the nature of the conflicts that participants reported were not consistent. Future researchers could avoid this issue by utilizing clearer language when prompting clients to narrate a conflict (e.g., argument, disagreement).

This research was also limited in exploring different relationship contexts. In Study 1, participants were not randomly assigned to report regulation use in family relationships, so we cannot generalize that regulation use does not vary between *all* relationship types (only between friendships and romantic relationships). Next, we only investigated regulation use within adult relationships, so we cannot generalize about regulation use in childhood, adolescence, or late adulthood. Lastly, this research does not explore differences in emotion regulation between different racial/ethnic groups. Beyond participants' racial/ethnic identity, this research does not ask about the racial/ethnic identity of the participants' relationship partner. We expect that cultural differences surrounding the appropriateness of emotion expressivity and differences

between individualistic and collectivist mindsets could affect the use of regulation strategies (Perel, 2000). In the future, researchers should examine cultural heterogeneity/homogeneity as a relationship factor that could affect the use of emotion regulation in response to relationship conflict.

Strengths and Future Directions

The reported research and the methods used have been preregistered to ensure transparency and integrity in hypotheses, data collection, and data analyses. Participants included in analyses passed attention checks, adding to the reliability of our results. In Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to a condition, allowing us to properly examine differences between condition. In Study 2, our sample size (n = 315) exceeded our sample size offered in our preregistration (n = 200), increasing the power of our results. The current research has also filled a gap in previous research. To our knowledge, past research has not examined the ways that self-criticism (an individual difference) and relationship factors (a contextual difference) affect emotion regulation strategy use in the same model or investigated potential interactions between self-criticism and relationship factors on emotion regulation strategy use.

This research has examined the use of intrapersonal emotion regulation that is prompted by interpersonal relationships. Future research implications and directions emerge from these findings. When examining predictors of emotion regulation, future research should focus on relationship factors and qualities rather than relationship type. Future research could examine causal relationships between relationship factors, self-criticism, and negative emotion. Research could investigate how the use emotion regulation strategies by one relationship partner affects the regulation strategy use of another participant. It could examine if different relationship factors interact with each other in predicting regulation use (e.g., does relationship importance predict strategy use differently at various levels of relationship satisfaction?) Finally, future

research could investigate the underlying reasons that relationship factors and self-criticism impact regulation strategy use (e.g., emotion regulation motives).

In addition to research implications, these findings also have clinical implications. Various types of therapy, including Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Interpersonal Therapy (IPT), focus on how to increase interpersonal effectiveness and improve affective processes in response to interpersonal difficulties (Dimeff & Linehan, 2001; Lipsitz & Markowitz, 2013). Within these approaches, in addition to focusing on emotion regulation patterns, professionals should examine the predictors of maladaptive and adaptive regulation (such as self-criticism and perceptions of relationship factors) to see ways that these variables may be perpetuating habitual maladaptive strategy use.

Conclusion

In the studies presented here, we examined the effects of self-criticism and relationship factors on the use of emotion regulation strategies following relationship conflict. We found that apart from negative emotion, greater self-criticism was associated with greater maladaptive strategies, and the qualities of a relationship (relationship importance, relationship satisfaction, comfort with emotional vulnerability, and partner emotional invalidation) predict some strategy use after conflict. However, self-criticism did not predict strategy use differently in different relationship settings. This research clarifies the relationships between self-criticism, relationship factors, and emotion regulation after relationship conflict, and future research would be influential in defining the directional effects of these variables and underlying reasons for their existence.

References

Aldao, A., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2010). Specificity of cognitive emotion regulation strategies: A transdiagnostic examination. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *48*(10), 974–983. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2010.06.002

Aldao, A., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2012). The influence of context on the implementation of adaptive emotion regulation strategies. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *50*(7–8), 493–501. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2012.04.004

Aldao, A., Nolen-Hoeksema, S., & Schweizer, S. (2010). Emotion-regulation strategies across psychopathology: A meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *30*(2), 217–237. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.11.004

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63*(4), 596–612.

Aune, K. S., & Comstock, J. (1991). Experience and expression of jealousy: Comparison between friends and romantics. *Psychological Reports*, *69*(1), 315–319. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1991.69.1.315

Barrett, L. F., Gross, J. J., Christensen, T. C., & Benvenuto, M. (2001). Knowing what you're feeling and knowing what to do about it: Mapping the relation between emotion differentiation and emotion regulation. *Cognition and Emotion*, *15*, 713–724. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930143000239

Bernstein, A., & Brantz, H. (2013). Tolerance of negative affective states (TNAS): Development and evaluation of a novel construct and measure. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *37*(3), 421–433. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-012-9471-6

Cantazaro, A., & Wei, M. (2010). Adult attachment, dependence, self-criticism, and depressive

symptoms: A test of a mediational model. *Journal of Personality*, *78*(4), 1135–1162. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00645.x

Clark, M. S., Ouellette, R., Powell, M. C., & Milberg, S. (1987). Recipient's Mood, Relationship Type, and Helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *53*(1), 94–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.1.94

De Santis, S., Falgares, G., & Kopala-Sibley, D. C. (2021). The relationship between attachment styles and internalizing/externalizing problems: The mediating role of self-criticism. *Current Psychology*, *40*(5), 2355–2365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00174-4

Dimeff, L., & Linehan, M. M. (2001). Dialectical Behavior Therapy in a nutshell. *The California Psychologist*, 1–3.

Dunkley, D. M., & Blankstein, K. R. (2000). Self-critical perfectionism, coping, hassles, and current distress: A structural equation modeling approach. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *24*(6), 713–730. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005543529245

Dunkley, D. M., Ma, D., Lee, I. A., Preacher, K. J., & Zuroff, D. C. (2014). Advancing complex explanatory conceptualizations of daily negative and positive affect: Trigger and maintenance coping action patterns. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *61*(1), 93–109. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034673

Dunkley, D. M., Zuroff, D. C., & Blankstein, K. R. (2003). Self-critical perfectionism and daily affect: Dispositional and situational influences on stress and coping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*(1), 234–252. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.1.234

Farrell, A. K., Imami, L., Stanton, S. C. E., & Slatcher, R. B. (2018). Affective processes as mediators of links between close relationships and physical health. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *12*(7), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12408

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1980). An analysis of coping in a middle-aged community sample. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *21*, 219–239.

Ford, B. Q., Gross, J. J., & Gruber, J. (2019). Broadening Our Field of View: The Role of Emotion Polyregulation. *Emotion Review*, *11*(3), 197–208. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073919850314

Fuhrman, R. W., Flannagan, D., & Matamoros, M. (2009). Behavior expectations in cross-sex friendships, same-sex friendships, and romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *16*(4), 575–596. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2009.01240.x

Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Spinhoven, P. (2001). Negative life events, cognitive emotion regulation and emotional problems. *Personality and Individual Relationships*, *30*, 1311–1327. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(00)00113-6

Goldstein, S. E. (2011). Relational aggression in young adults' friendships and romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *18*(4), 645–656. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01329.x

Gonzaga, G. C., Keltner, D., Londahl, E. A., & Smith, M. D. (2001). Love and the commitment problem in romantic relations and friendship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*(2), 247–262. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.2.247

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, *2*(3), 271–299.

Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion Regulation: Current Status and Future Prospects. *Psychological Inquiry*, *26*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.940781

Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social*

Psychology, *85*(2), 348–362. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348

Hayes, A. F. (2013). The PROCESS macro for SPSS and SAS (version 2.13) [Software].

Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, processes and outcomes. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *44*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2005.06.006

Holm-Denoma, J. M., Otamendi, A., & Joiner, Thomas E., J. (2008). Self-criticism as interpersonally maladaptive. In *Self-criticism and self-enhancement; theory, research, and clinical implications* (pp. 73–86). American Psychological Association.

Holt-Lunstad, J., & Uchino, B. N. (2015). Definition and conceptualizations of social support. *Health Behavior: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *183*.

Holt-Lunstad, J., Uchino, B. N., Smith, T. W., & Hicks, A. (2007). On the importance of relationship quality: The impact of ambivalence in friendships on cardiovascular functioning. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *33*(3), 278–290. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02879910

Hughes, D. J., Kratsiotis, I. K., Niven, K., & Holman, D. (2020). Personality traits and emotion regulation: A targeted review and recommendations. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, *20*(1), 63–67. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000644

Ireland, M. J., Clough, B. A., & Day, J. J. (2017). The cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire: Factorial, convergent, and criterion validity analyses of the full and short versions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *110*, 90–95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.01.035

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1979). Characterological versus behavioral self-blame: Inquiries into depression and rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*(10), 1798–1809.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.37.10.1798

Katz, B. A., Lustig, N., Assis, Y., & Yovel, I. (2017). Measuring regulation in the here and now: The development and validation of the state emotion regulation inventory (SERI). *Psychological Assessment*, *29*(10), 1235–1248. https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000420

Kito, M. (2005). Self-disclosure in romantic relationships and friendships among american and japanese college students. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *145*(2), 127–140. https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.145.2.127-140

Kochendorfer, L. B., & Kerns, K. A. (2020). A meta-analysis of friendship qualities and romantic relationship outcomes in adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *30*(1), 4–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12505

Koole, S. (2009). The psychology of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Cognition and Emotion*, *23*(1), 4–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930802619031

Kraaij, V., & Garnefski, N. (2019). The Behavioral Emotion Regulation Questionnaire: Development, psychometric properties and relationships with emotional problems and the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *137*(August 2018), 56–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.07.036

Laursen, B., & Hafen, C. A. (2010). Future directions in the study of close relationships: Conflict is bad (Except when it's not). *Social Development*, *19*(4), 858–872. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2009.00546.x

Lear, M. K., Luoma, J. B., & Chwyl, C. (2020). The influence of self-criticism and relationship closeness on peer-reported relationship need satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *163*(April), 110087. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110087

Levine, L. J., Lench, H. C., & Safer, M. A. (2009). Functions of Remembering and

Misremembering Emotion. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *23*, 1059–1075. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1610

Lindsey, E. W. (2020). Relationship context and emotion regulation across the life span. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, *20*(1), 59–62. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000666

Lipsitz, J. D., & Markowitz, J. C. (2013). Mechanisms of change in Interpersonal Therapy (IPT). *Clinical Psychology Review*, *33*(8), 1134–1147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2013.09.002

Marroquín, B., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2015). Emotion regulation and depressive symptoms: Close relationships as social context and influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *109*(5), 836–855. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000034

Martin, R. C., & Dahlen, E. R. (2005). Cognitive emotion regulation in the prediction of depression, anxiety, stress, and anger. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *39*(7), 1249–1260. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2005.06.004

Martins, T. C., Canavarro, M. C., & Moreira, H. (2015). Adult attachment insecurity and dyadic adjustment: The mediating role of self-criticism. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, *88*(4), 378–393. https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12055

Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., Bar-On, N., & Ein-Dor, T. (2010). The Pushes and Pulls of Close Relationships: Attachment Insecurities and Relational Ambivalence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *98*(3), 450–468. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017366

Mongrain, M., & Zuroff, D. C. (1995). Motivational and affective correlates of dependency and self-criticism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *18*, 347–354.

Moskowitz, D. S., & Zuroff, D. C. (1991). Contributions of personality and environmental factors to positive and negative affect in an adult community sample. *Poster Session Presented at the Meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association*.

Perel, E. (2000). A tourist's view of marriage: Cross-cultural couples-challenges, choices, and implications for therapy. In *Couples on the Fault Line* (pp. 179–204).

Ross, K. M., Rook, K., Winczewski, L., Collins, N., & Dunkel Schetter, C. (2019). Close relationships and health: The interactive effect of positive and negative aspects. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *13*(6), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12468

Santor, D. A., Pringle, J. D., & Israeli, A. L. (2000). Enhancing and disrupting cooperative behavior in couples: Effects of dependency and self-criticism following favorable and unfavorable performance feedback. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *24*(4), 379–397. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005523602102

Schneider, T. R. (2004). The role of neuroticism on psychological and physiological stress responses. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*(6), 795–804. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2004.04.005

Schreiber, R. E., & Veilleux, J. C. (2022). Perceived invalidation of emotion uniquely predicts affective distress: Implications for the role of interpersonal factors in emotional experience. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *184*(August 2021), 111191. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111191

Sedikides, C., & Michelle, L. (2008). On when self-enhancement and self-criticism function adaptively and maladaptively. In *Self-criticism and self-enhancement; theory, research, and clinical implications* (pp. 181–198). American Psychological Association.

Shiffman, S., Stone, A. A., & Hufford, M. R. (2008). Ecological momentary assessment. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *4*, 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.3.022806.091415

Southward, M. W., Heiy, J. E., & Cheavens, J. S. (2019). Emotions as context: Do the

naturalistic effects of emotion regulation strategies depend on the regulated emotion? *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *38*(6), 451–474. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2019.38.6.451

Sumter, S. R., Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2013). Perceptions of love across the lifespan: Differences in passion, intimacy, and commitment. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *37*(5), 417–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025413492486

Tamir, M. (2016). Why Do People Regulate Their Emotions? A Taxonomy of Motives in Emotion Regulation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *20*(3), 199–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315586325

Tang, Y., & Huang, Y. (2019). Contextual factors influence the selection of specific and broad types of emotion regulation strategies. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *58*(4), 1008–1033. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12313

Thompson, R., & Zuroff, D. C. (2004). The Levels of Self-Criticism Scale: Comparative self-criticism and internalized self-criticism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *36*(2), 419–430. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(03)00106-5

Vater, A., & Schröder-Abé, M. (2015). Explaining the link between personality and relationship satisfaction: Emotion regulation and interpersonal behaviour in conflict discussions. *European Journal of Personality*, *29*(2), 201–215. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1993

Watson, D., & Clark, L. A. (1994). *The PANAS-X: Manual for the positive and negative affect schedule-expanded form.*

Wei, M., Vogel, D. L., Ku, T. Y., & Zakalik, R. A. (2005). Adult attachment, affect regulation, negative mood, and interpersonal problems: The mediating roles of emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(1), 14–24.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.1.14

Werner, A. M., Tibubos, A. N., Rohrmann, S., & Reiss, N. (2019). The clinical trait self-criticism and its relation to psychopathology: A systematic review – Update. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *246*(June 2018), 530–547. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.12.069

Whiffen, V. E., Aube, J., Thompson, J., & Campbell, T. L. (2000). Attachment beliefs and interpersonal contexts associated with dependency and self-criticism. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *19*, 184–205.

Wood, J. V., Heimpel, S. A., Manwell, L. A., & Whittington, E. J. (2009). This Mood Is Familiar and I Don't Deserve to Feel Better Anyway: Mechanisms Underlying Self-Esteem Differences in Motivation to Repair Sad Moods. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *96*(2), 363–380. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012881

Zielinski, M. J., & Veilleux, J. C. (2018). The perceived invalidation of emotion scale (PIES): Development and psychometric properties of a novel measure of current emotion invalidation. *Psychological Assessment*, *30*(11), 1454–1467. https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000584

Zuroff, D. C., & Duncan, N. (1999). Self-criticism and conflict resolution in romantic couples. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, *31*(3), 137–149. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0087082

Supplemental Materials

Table A. *Intercorrelations of CERQ, BERQ, Self-Criticism, and After Conflict Emotion Scales*

	Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1.	Self-Blame	--															
2.	Rumination	.29**	--														
3.	Catastrophizing	.10	.55**	--													
4.	Other Blame	-.52**	.22**	.28**	--												
5.	Positive Reappraisal	.20**	.09	-.16*	-.24**	--											
6.	Refocusing on Planning	.25**	.42**	.10	-.12	.56**	--										
7.	Acceptance	.18*	.46**	.34**	.26**	.06	.11	--									
8.	Positive Refocusing	.10	.11	.14	-.06	.37**	.32**	.13	--								
9.	Putting into Perspective	.03	.03	-.28**	.05	.51**	.33**	.17*	.27**	--							
10.	Seeking Distraction	-.03	.27**	.21**	.15	.12	.14	.31**	.33**	.24**	--						
11.	Withdrawal	.22*	.51**	.47**	.20**	-.19**	.11	.33**	.04	-.04	.15*	--					
12.	Ignoring	.13	.16*	.26**	.06	-.05	.01	.33**	.29**	.07	.41**	.35**	--				
13.	Actively Approaching	.09	.06	-.11	-.09	.42**	.57**	.009	.15	.18*	-.06	-.09	-.19*	--			
14.	Seeking Social Support	-.08	.30**	.20**	.32**	.06	.28**	.20**	.02	.05	.15*	.14	-.12	.21**	--		
15.	Internalized Self-Criticism	.12	.43**	.20**	.20**	.01	.17*	.26**	.04	.08	.20**	.36**	.20**	.01	.11	--	
16.	Comparative Self-Criticism	.09	.18*	.15*	.02	-.11	.11	.11	-.09	-.11	.01	.20**	.12	-.07	.02	.49**	--
17.	After Conflict Negative Emotion	.24**	.52**	.53**	.17*	-.19*	.27**	.27**	.04	-.20**	.17*	.49**	.30**	-.05	.20**	.32**	.26**

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

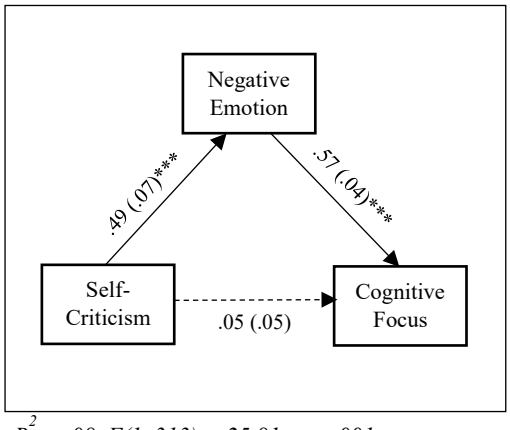
Table B. *Exploratory factor analysis of study 2 emotion regulation items*

Item	Avoidance	Adaptive	Active Blaming	Cognitive Focus
I tried to think about other things	.73			
I pretended as if nothing was wrong	.72			
I did other things to distract myself	.69			
I isolated myself	.47			
I let thoughts and reactions to the conflict pass through me without either obsessing over them or avoiding them		.69		
I talked with the person directly about how to approach the situation	-.45	.64		
I took action to address the conflict directly	-.50	.64		
I tried to put the conflict into perspective with other things in my life		.55		
I tried to think about the conflict from a different angle		.48		
I calmed myself down with sensory activities (exercise, music, taking a shower)		.46		
I blamed the other person for the mistakes they made during the conflict			.77	
I lashed out at the other person to make sure they knew how I felt			.75	
I tried to think about how the other person felt in the situation			-.56	
I shut down and shut the other person out			.47	
I thought about the conflict continuously				-.76
I blamed myself for the mistakes I made during the conflict				-.69
I thought about how terrible this conflict was for my relationship				-.68
I reached out to someone to comfort me				-.50

Table C. *Direct and indirect effects of self-criticism and relationship importance on regulation strategies*

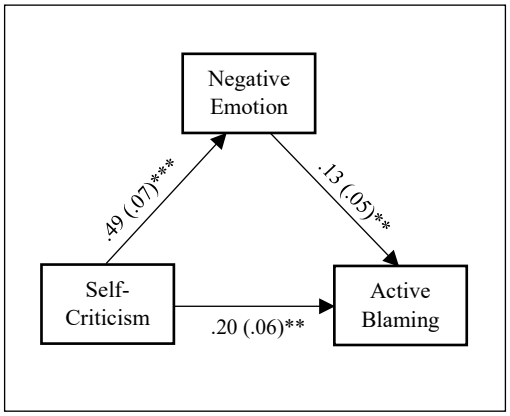
		Self-Criticism			Rel. Importance		
		Effect (SE)	LLCI	ULCI	Effect (SE)	LLCI	ULCI
Cognitive Focus	Direct	.05 (.05)	-.06	.15	**.10 (.05)**	**.02**	**.19**
	Indirect	**.28 (.04)**	**.19**	**.37**	.04 (.04)	-.05	.12
Active Blaming	Direct	**.20 (.06)**	**.08**	**.33**	**-.22 (.05)**	**-.33**	**-.11**
	Indirect	**.06 (.03)**	**.02**	**.12**	.01 (.01)	-.01	.05
Avoidance	Direct	**.21 (.06)**	**.09**	**.34**	**-.17 (.05)**	**-.28**	**-.06**
	Indirect	**.13 (.03)**	**.08**	**.20**	.02 (.02)	-.02	.07
Adaptive	Direct	**-.24 (.05)**	**-.34**	**-.14**	**.18 (.05)**	**.09**	**.27**
	Indirect	**.09 (.02)**	**.05**	**.14**	.01 (.01)	-.01	.03

Figure A. *Mediated model with cognitive focus outcome*



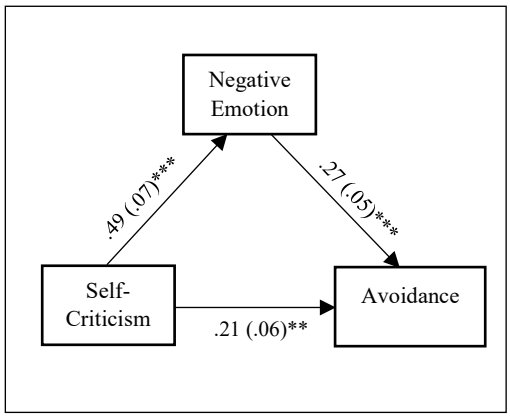
R^2 = .08, $F(1, 313) = 25.81$, $p < .001$
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Figure B. *Mediated model with active blaming outcome*



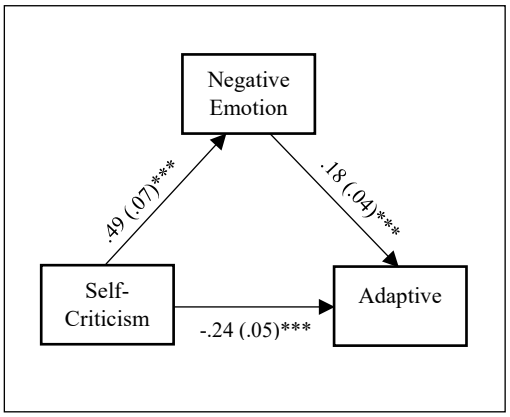
R^2 = .06, $F(1, 313) = 19.63$, $p < .001$
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Figure C. *Mediated model with avoidance outcome*



R^2 = .17, $F(2, 312) = 32.71$, $p < .001$
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Figure D. *Mediated model with adaptive strategies outcome*



R^2 = .03, $F(1, 313) = 9.00$, $p = .003$
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Appendix A

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) Revisions

	Original Item	Revised Item	Subscale
1	I feel that I am the one to blame for it.	I felt that I was the one to blame for it	Self-blame
2	I think that I have to accept that this has happened	I thought I had to accept that it happened	Acceptance
3	I often think about how I feel about what I have experienced	I often thought about my feelings about what I experienced	Rumination
4	I think of nicer things than what I have experienced	I thought of nicer things than what I experienced	Positive Refocusing
5	I think of what I can do best	I thought of what I could do best	Refocusing on Planning
6	I think I can learn something from the situation	I thought I could learn something from the situation	Positive Reappraisal
7	I think that it all could have been much worse	I thought that it all could have been much worse	Putting in Perspective
8	I often think that what I have experienced is much worse than what others have experienced	I often thought that what I experienced was much worse than what others have experienced	Catastrophizing
9	I feel that others are to blame for it.	I felt that the other person was to blame for it	Other Blame
10	I feel that I am the one who is responsible for what has happened	I felt that I was responsible for what happened	Self-blame
11	I think that I have to accept the situation	I thought I had to accept the situation	Acceptance
12	I am preoccupied with what I think and feel about what I have experienced	I was preoccupied with what I thought and felt about what I experienced	Rumination
13	I think of pleasant things that have nothing to do with it	I thought of pleasant things that had nothing to do with it	Positive Refocusing
14	I think about how I can best cope with the situation	I thought about how I could best cope with the situation	Refocusing on Planning
15	I think that I can become a stronger person as a result of what has happened	I thought I could become a stronger person because of what happened	Positive Reappraisal
16	I think that other people go through much worse experiences.	I thought that other people go through much worse experiences	Putting in Perspective
17	I keep thinking about how terrible it is what I have experienced	I kept thinking about how terrible the experience was	Catastrophizing
18	I feel that others are responsible for what has happened	I felt that the other person was responsible for what happened	Other Blame
19	I think about the mistakes I have made in this matter	I thought about the mistakes I made in this matter	Self-Blame
20	I think that I cannot change anything about it.	I thought that I could not change anything about it	Acceptance
21	I want to understand why I feel the way I do about what I have experienced	I wanted to understand why I felt the way I did about what I experienced	Rumination
22	I think of something nice instead of what has happened	I thought of something nice instead of what happened	Positive Refocusing
23	I think about how to change the situation	I thought about how to change the situation	Refocusing on Planning
24	I think that the situation also has its positive sides	I thought that the situation also had its positive sides	Positive Reappraisal

25	I think that it hasn't been too bad compared to other things	I thought it hadn't been too bad compared to other things	Putting in Perspective
26	I often think that what I have experienced is the worst that can happen to a person	I often thought that what I experienced was the worst that could happen to a person	Catastrophizing
27	I think about the mistakes others have made in this matter.	I thought about the mistakes the other person made in this matter	Other Blame
28	I think that basically the cause must lie within myself	I thought it was basically my fault	Self-Blame
29	I think that I must learn to live with it.	I thought that I must learn to live with it	Acceptance
30	I dwell upon the feelings the situation has evoked in me	I dwelled upon the feelings the situation evoked in me	Rumination
31	I think about pleasant experiences	I thought about pleasant experiences	Positive Refocusing
32	I think about a plan of what I can do best	I thought about a plan of what I could do best	Refocusing on Planning
33	I look for the positive sides to the matter	I looked for the positive sides to the matter	Positive Reappraisal
34	I tell myself that there are worse things in life	I told myself that there are worse things in life	Putting in Perspective
35	I continually think about how horrible the situation has been	I continually thought about how horrible the situation was	Catastrophizing
36	I feel that basically the cause lies with others	I felt that it was basically the other person's fault	Other Blame

Appendix B

Behavioral Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) Revisions

	Original Item	Revised Item	Subscale
1.	I engage in other, unrelated activities	I engaged in other, unrelated activities	Seeking Distraction
2.	I avoid other people	I avoided other people	Withdrawal
3.	I try to do something about it	I tried to do something about it	Actively Approaching
4.	I look for someone to comfort me	I looked for someone to comfort me	Seeking Social Support
5.	I move on and pretend that nothing happened	I moved on and pretended that nothing happened	Ignoring
6.	I set my worries aside by doing something else	I set my worries aside by doing something else	Seeking Distraction
7.	I withdraw	I withdrew	Withdrawal
8.	I get to work on it	I got to work on it	Actively Approaching
9.	I ask someone for advice	I asked someone for advice	Seeking Social Support
10.	I repress it and pretend it never happened	I repressed it and pretended it never happened	Ignoring
11.	I do other things to distract myself	I did other things to distract myself	Seeking Distraction
12.	I isolate myself	I isolated myself	Withdrawal
13.	I take action to deal with it	I took action to deal with it	Actively Approaching
14.	I share my feelings with someone	I shared my feelings with someone	Seeking Social Support
15	I behave as if nothing is going on	I behaved as if nothing is going on	Ignoring
16.	I engage in an activity which makes me feel good	I engaged in an activity which made me feel good	Seeking Distraction
17.	I close myself off to others	I closed myself off to others	Withdrawal
18.	I do whatever is required to deal with it	I did whatever was required to deal with it	Actively Approaching
19.	I look for someone who can support me	I looked for someone who can support me	Seeking Social Support
20.	I block it out	I blocked it out	Ignoring

Appendix C

Emotion Regulation Strategy Subscales Post Factor Analysis

Cognitive Focus	
I thought about the conflict continuously	
I blamed myself for the mistakes I made during the conflict	
I thought about how terrible this conflict was for my relationship	
I reached out to someone to comfort me	
Active Blaming	
I blamed the other person for the mistakes they made during the conflict	
I lashed out at the other person to make sure they knew how I felt	
I tried to think about how the other person felt in the situation	Reversed
I shut down and shut the other person out	
Avoidance	
I tried to think about other things	
I pretended as if nothing was wrong	
I did other things to distract myself	
I isolated myself	
Adaptive Strategies	
I let thoughts and reactions to the conflict pass through me without either obsessing over them or avoiding them	
I talked with the person directly about how to approach the situation	
I took action to address the conflict directly	
I tried to put the conflict into perspective with other things in my life	
I tried to think about the conflict from a different angle	
I calmed myself down with sensory activities (exercise, music, taking a shower)	

Appendix D

Perceived Invalidation of Emotion (PIES) Revisions

Original Item	Revised Item
1) When I share how I am feeling, others don't seem to mirror or match my emotions. For example, they don't share sadness with me when I'm sad or happiness with me when I'm happy.	1. When I shared how I was feeling, {Partner Name} didn't seem to mirror or match my emotions. For example, they didn't share sadness with me when I was sad or happiness with me when I was happy.
2) When I share how I'm feeling, others want me to "get over it" or "accept it and move on."	2) When I shared how I was feeling, {Partner Name} wanted me to "get over it" or "accept it and move on."
3) When I share how I'm feeling, others seem like they don't want to hear what I have to say.	3) When I shared how I was feeling, {Partner Name} seemed like they didn't want to hear what I had to say.
4) When I share how I'm feeling, others look down on me or judge me.	4) When I shared how I was feeling, {Partner Name} looked down on me or judged me.
5) When I share how I'm feeling, others don't take me seriously.	5) When I shared how I was feeling, {Partner Name} didn't take me seriously.
6) When I try to share how I'm feeling, others tell me or imply what I should actually feel.	6) When I tried to share how I was feeling, {Partner Name} told me or implied what I should actually feel.
7) Others get mad or upset at me when I express my feelings.	7) {Partner Name} got mad or upset at me when I expressed my feelings.
9) Others don't take my side or agree with how I'm feeling.	8) {Partner Name} didn't take my side or agree with how I was feeling.
10) Others make me feel like it's not okay for me to feel the way that I do.	9) {Partner Name} made me feel like it was not okay for me to feel the way that I did.
11) Others make me feel that my emotions are unimportant.	10) {Partner Name} made me feel that my emotions were unimportant.