

Relationship encounters



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The purpose of this paper is to show overall views and many factors that college students encounter while in the dating relationship process.

This paper will discuss the many issues that college students encounter while seeking companionship and friendship. The conclusion of this paper will discuss how students end their relationship.

Many college students will encounter challenges while in the dating process. When searching for a mate the selection may seem to be limited when finding a compatible mate. Many students will encounter factors that can enhance or destroy the relationship. Scientists now believe that the impulse that drives us to mate, marry, and remain monogamous is not a result of mere social convention: It is also a complex mix of naturally occurring chemicals and hormones that helps guide us through life's most important decision (Dowling 1).

Love at first sight is no apocryphal cliché. Writer Nuna Alberts reports that researchers now know why one glimpse of the right person can set off a chemical reaction leading to romance. But what happens after that? Why do some relationships succeed while others fizzle? That may be more magic than science.

New research in the field of love and attraction show that romance along the domain of poets, philosophers and five-hanky movies may be ruled as much by molecules as it is by emotion. The physiological component, say the researchers, may help explain some of love's mysteries: why opposites attract, why so many seemingly mismatched couples succeed, why we stick together with partners through even the worst (Dowling 1). When looking for

a compatible mate, many “ males and females tend to select partners with whom they share similar traits (Smith 1).

” “ Buss and Barnes (1996) studied a group of married people ranging in age from 18-40 years and found that the 10 most appealing attributes listed were honesty, companionship, affection, consideration, intelligence, dependableness, understanding, loyalty, interesting to talk to, and kindness (Smith 1).”

“ For instance, while Smith (1952) found some agreement with Walker, he noted that such qualities as friendliness and consideration were rated higher than status laden attributes, even though campus prestige (e. g. fraternity or sorority membership) had significant influence on (the) choice of dating partner (Smith 1).

” “ Results indicated females preferred to date a man who was similar to them in education and occupation and preferred to marry a man who had these similarities as well as religious values, and desire for children. Only men emphasized physical appearance in both dating and marital partners. Both sexes believed that homogamy is associated with happy and lasting relationships (Knox 1).”

Many male and female college students prefer to date someone of the same caliber as himself or herself. “ Both sexes believed that homogamy is associated with happy and lasting relationships.

Homogamy refers to individual initiative toward sameness. The homogamy theory states that individuals tend to be attracted to and become involved

with those who are similar to themselves in such characteristics as values, education, and age (Knox 1).” Many students who may not have a mate at the present time may choose an undesirable partner and will allow themselves to do things that they may not necessary want to do or find themselves in a very uncomfortable situation. When males or females, college or non-college-students make this choice their situation may become bleak. A female or male that becomes sexually active with an undesirable mate may incur an unwanted pregnancy.

Many males and females may also suffer from domestic violence. Domestic violence occurs when spouses, intimate partners or dates use physical abuse, threats, emotional abuse, harassment or stalking to control the behavior of their partners. In studies of domestic violence on college campuses across the nation, the results are sobering there are many symptoms that can escalate to violent behavior. One is aggressive behavior, where feelings of anger or hurt are expressed by destroying property of sentimental value. Another is physical coercion or restraint, where individuals refuse to allow their partners to leave a situation. Those are certainly danger signs. Davis said once someone crosses the barrier where raised voices escalate to physical violence, the frequency and severity of abuse usually increase.

The biggest challenge for victims is to ask someone for help. Lambert agrees sometimes it takes a long time before people are willing to get help (Fritchen 1-2). Approximately 1 in 10 high school students has experienced physical violence in dating relationships.

Among college students, the figure rises to 22%, equivalent to the rate for adults (Manning 1). “ Domestic violence is not defined by specific acts, but by a combination of psychological, social, and familiar factors (Domestic Violence Facts and Statistics 1).” “ Between 2 and 4 million women are victims of domestic violence annually (Fritchen 1). “ A slap becomes a closed fist or a choke, or you may get thrown down a flight of stairs Once the relationship crosses into physical intimidation of any form, there is no safety anymore (Fritchen 1).

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“ Most adults assume that violent relationships show how a lack of self-esteem in one or the other of the couple can be responsible for the ups and downs of the relationship. Telling their partner over and over that they are flawed, unlovable, and lucky to be loved by the abuser is where most abusive men start with emotional abuse (Tantilikitranout 1). A doctor named Tolman conducted a study at a high school outside of Chicago, he found that 30 percent of dating relationships included some physical or sexual violence. The overwhelming majority of cases involve a male abuser and a female victim.

The scary thing to me was that girls of 14 were as likely to experience dating violence as girls who were 18, Tolman says. Only a handful of girls told an adult, a parent or teacher. If they told anyone it was their peers. (Gardner, 12)

Part of the problem comes from sex-role stereotypes that can be particularly pronounced in adolescence. Having a boyfriend is seen as one of the ways you are successful as a girl, says Barbara Bennett.

Some girls will think it is worth an occasional violent incident in order to keep the boyfriend. Like their adult fellow victims of violence, they think hell change (Tantilikittranout 1-3). Six-hundred twenty never married undergraduates at a large southern university identified the most frequent problem they had experienced in their current or most recent dating relationship. A higher percentage of casual daters reported problems related to different values, honest, shyness, unwanted pressure to engage in sexual behavior, and acceptance than involved daters.

Similarly, a higher percentage of involved daters reported problems related to time for each other, lack of money, and places to go. Implications for the findings are discussed.

The data consisted of 620 never married undergraduates at East Carolina University who voluntarily completed an anonymous questionnaire designed to assess various relationship issues. Among the respondents, 63% were women, 37% were men. Eighty-percent were first year students and sophomores; twenty percent were juniors and seniors. The median age was 19.

Respondents were predominately white (87%) and African-American (8.5%) with 1% Hispanic and 3.6% other. About half (51.7%) were casually dating while the other half (48.

3%) were involved in a reciprocal love relationship. Ten months was the median number of months respondents reported dating their current partner.

The respondents were given a list of 16 problems identified in previous relationship studies and asked to CHECK ONLY ONE which was the MOST frequent problem they had experienced in their current or most recent relationship. It is clear that communication topped the list for both casual and involved daters. Lack of commitment was the second most frequently reported problem by casual daters. While casual daters were struggling with commitment issues, the second most frequent problem reported by involved daters was other problems.

Among the issues they identify (not in the list of 16 provided for this study) are differential interests in sexual involvement, sexual dysfunctions, alcohol/substance abuse, depression and self-concept issues.

Jealousy was the third most frequent problem identified by both casual and involved daters. Jealousy by the partner had an effect on the respondent which included feelings of loss of affection, rejection, insecurity, and anxiety. Time for the relationship was a problem for about 10 percent of the involved daters which did not even appear on the top ten list of the casual daters.

Different values were reported by twice as many casual daters as involved daters. Those who remain are those with whom they share similar values. It is not surprising the involved daters report fewer differences in values.

Honesty was also reported as a relationship problem by a higher percentage of casual daters (7.5% vs. 4.

2%)(Zusman and Knox 1-3).

One hundred-and-seventy two undergraduates at a large southern university completed a confidential questionnaire about how they ended their last love relationship . While prior research has focused on why partners end relationships, this study investigated how partners ended their relationships. Over eighty-six percent of the respondents had a specific conversation with the partner about ending the relationship. Previous research suggests that such directness, which may involve de-escalation is associated with remaining friends after the love relationship has ended.

The positive implication of such directness is suggested. The data consisted of 246 undergraduates at East Carolina University who voluntarily completed a confidential questionnaire designed to reveal how they ended their most recent love relationship. Of the respondents, 67% were female and 33% were male.

Sixty-nine percent were freshmen and sophomores and 31% were juniors and seniors. Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported that they had been in love; fifty eight percent were currently in love.

Seventy percent or 172 reported that they ended their last love relationship and how they did so. Of these 172, 51 were male and 121 were female.

College students tended to tell their partners directly, either face-to-face or on the phone, when they were ending the relationship. Science tells us that

18 months to three years after the first moment of infatuation, is not unusual for feelings of neutrality for one's love partner to set in (Why don't you take out the trash?" vs. " I dream about you all the time") For many there could be a chemical explanation.

The mix of dopamine, norepinephrine and PEA is so much like a drug, say scientists, that it takes greater and greater doses to get the same buzz.

So after someone has been with one person for a time, his (or her) brain stops reacting to the chemicals because it is habituated. ' the brain can't maintain the revved-up status,' says Walsh. ' As happens with any drug, it needs more PEA to make the heart go pitter-patter. Couples with attachments that are shaky for other reasons (money woes, abuse, irreconcilable differences) may part and -because the body's tolerance for PEA soon diminishes- seek someone new with whom to find the thrill of early love. More likely, however, committed couples will move on to what science suggests is the most rewarding and enduring aspect of love.

Though the same addictive rush isn't involved, ongoing physical contact, not just sex, helps produce endorphins, another brain chemical, and continued high doses of oxytocin.

Endorphins calm the mind and kill anxiety. Both chemicals are like natural opiates and help stabilize the couple by inducing what famed obstetrician Michel Odent, of London's Primal Health Research Center (whose book, *The Scientification of Love*, will be published this year), calls " a drug-like dependency. (Knox, Zusman and It is true that many college students will face a number of challenges while in the dating arena. Many students will

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choose a love mate that is similar to them in character, personality, moral beliefs, and values.

Each relationship will be different for each couple. Some women may meet someone who seems to be a good partner but the results may turn out differently. Although it was not mentioned above, many couples will be confronted with issues about sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, herpes, syphilis, chlamydia and many other sexually transmitted diseases.

Finally shyness, unwanted pressure to engage in sexual behavior, and acceptance were among the top ten relationship problems identified by casual daters which did not even appear as issues among involved daters. Apparently, involved daters are more comfortable with each other, are more respectful/less sexually exploitative, and feel greater acceptance than partners who only date each other casually (Zusman and Knox 1-3). Many students may be confronted with the issues of letting go of a love-relationship with a partner while other students will obtain and maintain relationships that will be nurturing and prosperous.

Many students experience love at first sight, which can result from the brain's chemicals and hormones in the body. Many students may become infatuated or become over exasperated with feelings as they meet someone who is new to them in which they find a mutual attraction. Some students will face break-up issues and the issues of sex and sexually transmitted diseases. " But in the end..

, will love's mysteries ever unravel in a laboratory? Some, like Fallon, say yes. Others, perhaps most of us luck enough to have experienced true love,

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might believe—and wish—otherwise. Even in this advanced age of science, where we can transplant organs, map the human genome and clone our own offspring, we still have not come close to understanding what, exactly, ignites our spark of life, our souls, our very being. Maybe, possibly, that will remain true for the farthest reaches of love (Knox, Zusman, and Nieves 3).

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