

Moral judgment of close relationship behaviors

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Abstract

Two studies with a college student ($n = 287$) and an Internet volunteer sample ($n = 795$) assessed moral judgments for norm violations in close relationships. We developed a 31-item questionnaire that assessed participants' moral judgments of potential norm violations in relationships, including sexual threats (e.g., watching others masturbate), emotional threats (e.g., keeping romantic memorabilia from past relationships), friendship boundaries (e.g., dating a best friend's ex-partner), digital infidelity (e.g., *sexting*), and privacy violations (e.g., looking through a partner's belongings). In addition, we assessed general moral concerns, attachment style, and sociosexuality. Results showed that concerns about purity/degradation predicted harsher moral judgments for most types of violations, even when controlling for other moral concerns. Attachment-related avoidance predicted greater permissiveness toward emotional threats, digital infidelity, and friendship boundaries but harsher judgments for privacy violations, whereas attachment anxiety predicted the opposite pattern. Sociosexuality predicted greater permissiveness toward sexual behaviors. Female participants judged most behaviors more harshly than did males. We interpret findings within the frameworks of Attachment Theory and Moral Foundations Theory.

Keywords

Attachment, close relationships, gender, judgment, morality, motivated reasoning, sociosexuality

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In this study, we sought to discern how people judge the moral *wrongness* of potential norm violations in close relationships. Previous research has typically focused on either abstract moral concerns (e.g., preference for utilitarian goals) or unrealistic thought exercises (e.g., turning a switch to divert a train, saving five people's lives at the cost of one death, known as the *trolley dilemma*). Thus, leading researchers have called for a deeper understanding of realistic, domain-specific, "everyday" social moral quandaries (e.g., Bloom, 2010; Ditto & Liu, 2012). A relatively unexplored life domain for moral consideration is interpersonal relationships, though there is some developing research in this area (Koleva, Selterman, Iyer, Ditto, & Graham, 2014; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012), which is the focus of this article.

A deeper understanding of morals/ethics within close relationships is essential to relationships researchers, as it has implications for understanding partners' motivations and decisions (e.g., romantic engagement with extra-dyadic partners), emotional processes (e.g., jealousy and anger), and the ultimate success/failure of their relationships (breakup vs. stability and satisfaction). Understanding how people conceptualize behaviors as acceptable or unacceptable may assist in predicting personal and dyadic outcomes and may eventually yield effective interventions for individuals/couples to increase relationship well-being. In addition, we gain a greater understanding of how moral judgment, which reflects individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural forces, may be associated with norms and expectations for close relationships. In this research, we explored how people considered a variety of different behaviors that people may encounter in their relationships. In two studies, we probed judgments toward morally ambiguous relational behaviors within the framework of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982 [1969]; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) and Moral Foundations Theory (MFT; Haidt & Graham, 2007). By examining how people perceive the moral wrongness of relational behavior, we approach a deeper understanding of ethical standards for interpersonal relationships and individual differences in those forming such judgments.

Moral Foundations Theory

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993), we define moral *wrongness* as the degree to which participants adopt a moralizing or permissive stance toward the relational behaviors of interest. In other words, a behavior is morally wrong if participants endorse the view that people should not engage in this behavior (importantly, this is not a categorical distinction, but rather a tendency to judge behaviors as morally OK or wrong on a continuum). Previous research has explored moral/ethical judgments toward taboo violations (Haidt, 2012; Haidt et al., 1993), which sometimes occur in the context of close relationships (e.g., incest). These findings have been used in part to illuminate *emotional primacy* in moral judgment—meaning that moral judgments are formed automatically and are based on emotional arousal, not deliberate/rational reasoning (Haidt, 2001). Other research has focused on general attitudes toward sexual behavior and taboo relational behavior (e.g., infidelity/adultery) in a quasi-moral context. For example, research has documented conservative religious norms as variables that predict more negative attitudes toward a variety of sexual behaviors, such as premarital sex (see Willetts, Sprecher, & Beck, 2004).

The MFT (Haidt & Graham, 2007) argues that in making judgments about moral right and wrong, people are guided by several psychological moral foundations: (a) care/harm, (b) fairness/cheating, (c) loyalty/betrayal, (d) authority/disrespect, and (e) purity/degradation. This approach stands in contrast with the previously dominant morality framework, which was based on Western notions of morality and was limited to concerns about individual welfare and justice (Turiel, 1983). According to MFT, the care foundation gives rise to moral concerns about minimizing pain and suffering to others. Fairness engenders concerns about reciprocity, equality, and justice. The loyalty foundation, as the name suggests, is based on moral concerns about devotion to social groups (e.g., nation, community, sports team, etc.). Authority concerns are based on humans' long history of living in hierarchical structures, and they encompass virtues such as good leadership, respect for authority figures, and the fulfillment of obligations and duties. Finally, the purity foundation is based on moral concerns about sanctity, degradation, and disgusting actions. MFT argues that these foundations underlie judgments of right and wrong and that individuals differ reliably in their sensitivity to moral concerns related to each foundation.

A number of studies have demonstrated the utility of the pluralistic approach to morality espoused by MFT. For example, Graham et al. (2011) showed that political liberals primarily rely on the care and fairness foundations, whereas political conservatives rely on all five foundations about equally. Although there is variation in how cultures elaborate and build upon the moral foundations to proscribe or prescribe specific norms and behaviors, the basic patterns of liberal-conservative differences in foundation endorsement have been replicated in other countries (e.g., Italy and the Netherlands) and with samples from all major world regions, including Western and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia, and Africa (Bobbio, Nencini, & Sarrica, 2011; Graham et al., 2013; Van Leeuwen & Park, 2009). Importantly, the broader theory is based on cultural anthropological work in India (Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987) and Brazil (Haidt et al., 1993).

MFT is also useful for understanding specific phenomena in the relationship domain. For example, controlling for the ideological differences in morality described above, Koleva et al. (2012) found that concerns about the five foundations, especially about purity/sanctity, predict individual attitudes on a variety of "culture war" sociopolitical issues, many of which are relevant in the relationship domain, such as homosexual relations, legalized same-sex marriage, abortion, and pornography. Furthermore, recent findings suggest that moral foundation concerns relate to romantic adult attachment (Koleva et al., 2014). Anxious attachment was associated with greater concerns about care, fairness, and purity, while avoidant attachment was associated with weaker concern for these foundations. Furthermore, these effects were mediated by attachment-related differences in emotional tendencies such as empathic concern and disgust sensitivity. These results suggest that foundation endorsement is relevant in a close relationship context.

What remains to be seen is how these foundations relate to moral judgments of relational more specifically. Based on the previous work involving empathy and caregiving in relationships, it is likely that concerns about care toward significant others (e.g., minimizing harm) will drive these judgments, although it is also plausible that

concerns over fairness/equity (e.g., “cheating”) and purity concerns (e.g., sexual restraint vs. promiscuity) will have a significant role in participants’ judgments. According to MFT, loyalty concerns one’s devotion to groups (e.g., country, sports team, church groups, and community) rather than dyads, and authority concerns one’s deference and reverence toward group leaders and individuals/institutions in a position of power or respect (e.g., bosses, police officers, priests, presidents, and the elderly). Neither of those foundations clearly lends itself to hypotheses about close dyadic relationships, thus we did not form hypotheses for them but we kept them in the analyses for completeness and as statistical controls for the other three foundations of interest (Koleva et al., 2014). In contrast, we confidently formulated directional hypotheses for care, fairness, and purity in part due to Koleva et al.’s (2014) findings described above and also due to the fact that most psychological research has treated the concept of morality as focused on care and fairness concerns. Thus, the existing literature offers clues to associations primarily with those foundations.

Relationship norms

With regard to the study of ethical norms and moral violations at the relational level (e.g., what is inappropriate to do or say between romantic partners or close friends), research is scant. This may be because moral violations are difficult to study, given the lack of widespread consensus on what behaviors are unethical. Relationships researchers tend to treat relationship norms and betrayals as idiosyncratic, depending on preferences within dyads (e.g., Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002). Put another way, there is not a clear consensus on a normative level for what behaviors are considered moral betrayals in relationships. For example, what constitutes *infidelity* in a romantic relationship is not easily defined and differs greatly across individuals (Tsapelas, Fisher, & Aron, 2011). The act of adultery is generally considered unethical, but other behaviors are less clearly defined as right or wrong. For example, dancing or exchanging gifts with an extra-dyadic partner are considered ambiguous with regard to whether they constitute infidelity (Wilson, Mattingly, Clark, Wiedler, & Bequette, 2011). We sought to expand on this by studying how people perceive other types of ambiguous violations, for example, keeping romantic memorabilia (e.g., love letters) from a previous partner after forming a new committed relationship with a different partner. Furthermore, personality characteristics in the beholder (e.g., attachment styles), or aspects of the individual(s) being evaluated (e.g., whether they are male or female), may determine whether people view such behaviors as moral violations. For example, Wilson, Mattingly, Clark, Wiedler, and Bequette (2011) found that individuals with a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation were less likely to perceive explicit behaviors (e.g., oral sex) as cheating, but this association was not significant for ambiguous behaviors (e.g., hugging).

Pop culture writer Chuck Klosterman (2006) described a fictional scenario between two romantic partners, Jack and Jane, who have been in a happy relationship for 2 years. One day Jack watches another woman masturbate in her apartment (with absolutely no physical contact and no emotional intimacy). He believes this episode to be weird/strange but not unethical. He innocently mentions it to his partner Jane, who becomes extremely upset and ends the relationship, cutting off all contact with Jack. This example

illustrates a phenomenon that we aimed to illuminate in this research. While some may believe it permissible to watch another person masturbate (with their consent), that exact same behavior is perhaps not acceptable within the norms established by committed romantic partnerships, despite the fact that the boundaries of such partnerships are not always explicitly defined. In addition, there is no clear right or wrong answer, as each party involved (in this case, Jack and Jane) holds different beliefs about the wrongness of the action, and these beliefs may vary based on personality traits and/or situational variables.

Another limitation of previous research on moral judgments is that the behaviors in question tend to occur in a universal rather than situational context. For example, whether premarital sex or infidelity is acceptable or tolerated in society is different from whether people believe it is acceptable or tolerable for themselves or for specific others within the norms and boundaries of their/others' relationships. Assessing whether a behavior is permissible in the abstract is a separate task from assessing whether a behavior is permissible in the context of a friendship or a romantic partnership.

Individual differences

Aside from individual differences in generalized moral concerns (captured within the MFT framework), we wanted to examine three individual variables relevant to relationship attitudes and functioning, namely attachment, sociosexuality, and gender. We focused on attachment variables and gender in part because of their prominence in relationship science; subsequently we briefly summarize relevant studies from the large literature showing consistent links between these traits and relationship outcomes that are highly relevant to our research questions examining moral judgment. In addition, many of the behaviors in question are sexual in nature; thus, we chose to include sociosexuality as a gauge of attitudes and behavior in this domain. Taken together, these trait variables are highly theoretically relevant to our research questions about moral judgments toward ambiguous norm violations. Including these predictors (attachment, gender, and sociosexuality) will better situate our findings into the broader context of how these individual differences are associated with relationship mechanisms.

As discussed earlier, attachment styles have been implicated in moral character, behavior, and judgment (Koleva et al., 2014; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). According to Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982 [1969]), people's tendencies to experience healthy outcomes in close relationships across the lifespan largely stem from early experiences with primary caregivers in infancy. As a result of having empathetic, available, responsive, and nurturing parents, secure individuals grow to trust others and experience healthier emotional adjustment as well as higher levels of intimacy, quality communication, and caregiving in relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In contrast, those individuals raised with inconsistent or emotionally unavailable parents come to view relationships with increased fear and distrust. Attachment-related avoidance and anxiety are the two primary dimensions of insecurity that yield more negative affect/emotional distress, increased conflict, and weakened communication within dyads (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Insecure attachment is associated with the tendency to interpret ambiguous relationship events in more negative ways and to respond with more negative emotion (Collins, 1996).

Both types of insecure attachment are associated with increased jealousy and vigilance about betrayal in close relationships, in part due to preoccupied thoughts of abandonment, which is common with anxious attachment or mistrusting/suspicion toward others, which is common with avoidant attachment (Buunk, 1997; Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997), but these jealousy-evoked responses manifest in different ways. For example, highly anxious individuals are more likely to exhibit electronic surveillance behavior, while avoidant individuals show the opposite pattern and disengage with their partners (Marshall, Bejanyan, Di Castro, & Lee, 2012). These attachment style effects on responding to potential relationship norm violations may have implications for moral judgments/perception.

Given recent studies linking attachment with various altruistic/prosocial behaviors such as helping and volunteerism (e.g., Gillath et al., 2005) and honesty/authenticity (Gillath, Sesko, Shaver, & Chun, 2010), Shaver and Mikulincer (2012) extended the framework of Attachment Theory to apply to moral cognition more broadly, they theorized that insecure individuals would be more strongly motivated by *defensive* morality (the desire to augment self-relevant and egoistic needs, independent of others' needs).

These results suggest that individuals will judge such behavior as ethically wrong or right depending partially on their attachment styles. We predicted that those high in attachment anxiety would be less tolerant of any morally ambiguous behavior in relationships and be more likely to say that ambiguous norm violations are wrong. In contrast, we predicted that those high in attachment avoidance would display the opposite pattern of responding, with a more libertine mind-set; that is, they would be more likely to condone ambiguous norm violations.

Sociosexual orientation (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) is another trait construct implicated in individual differences in behavior within close relationships, particularly with sexuality and attitudes toward monogamy. Individuals with an *unrestricted* sociosexual orientation are more likely to be sexually promiscuous, with a higher number of desired and actual sexual partners and a more permissive attitude toward sexual encounters (Simpson, Wilson, & Winterheld, 2004). In addition, an unrestricted sociosexual orientation is often associated with attachment avoidance (Simpson et al., 2004), both of which are likely to play a role in sexual preferences, behavior, attitudes, and ethical/moral judgments (making it essential to include both variables in our design to account for overlapping construct variance). We predicted that sociosexuality would be associated with more permissive attitudes toward morally ambiguous or taboo sexual behaviors in relationships (e.g., engaging in cybersex with someone other than a current partner, but with no physical contact or emotional intimacy).

Some research suggests that gender schemas are associated with differences in friendship norms and behavior. For example, females may display more open communication, emotional disclosure, and intimacy in dyadic relationships (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Females also tend to expect more of their friends, especially in terms of intimacy and support, although men have higher expectations for agency and fitness (Hall, 2011). In addition, women display more disapproval toward friends who engage in emotionally

related betrayals (e.g., canceling plans in favor of a date and failing to provide support or disclose feelings), and both men and women viewed cheek-kissing (a form of physical contact which could be considered romantic or platonic) as less acceptable if initiated by a male friend compared to a female friend (Felmlee, Sweet, & Sinclair, 2012).

We also considered previous research suggesting that men and women may have different expectations, desires, and experiences with sexual behavior (Vohs, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2004), which makes gender a relevant variable in our analyses. Regardless of why these differences exist (e.g., biological/evolutionary or gender role socialization mechanisms), research has shown, for example, that men are more accepting of casual sex for themselves and others (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Thus, one possibility is that men would hold more permissive judgments toward morally ambiguous sexual behavior relative to women. We also considered a competing prediction that men would form harsher judgments toward sexual violations, whereas women would form harsher judgments toward emotional violations. We predicted this pattern may emerge due to controversial yet robust gender differences in romantic jealousy (Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth, 1992). In this line of research, participants are prompted to imagine their romantic partners (a) engaging in sexual intercourse with another person or (b) falling in love/becoming emotionally attached to another person. Typically, men report being more distressed by the former, while women report being more distressed by the latter. However, there is a debate regarding the cause and interpretation of this difference (Harris, 2000, 2003).

Furthermore, gender of the target may also be relevant to moral judgment, as some studies have shown that women's sexual behavior is judged more harshly than men's sexual behavior (Conley, Ziegler, & Moors, 2013). The *sexual double standard* is the tendency for people to endorse more restrictive norms for female sexual behaviors compared to men or to perceive the identical behaviors more negatively for women than men (Sakaluk & Milhausen, 2012). In vignette experiments, participants who read about a woman who accepted an offer for casual sex rated her as less intelligent, less mentally healthy, less competent, more promiscuous, and more risky than participants who read about a man who engaged in the same behavior (Conley et al., 2013).

Motivated moral reasoning

Finally, we were also interested in whether moral judgments about different relational violations were subject to motivated moral reasoning effects—Does the acceptability of the various behaviors vary according to who is engaging in them? Ditto, Pizarro, and Tannenbaum (2009) have argued that humans routinely engage in motivated moral reasoning, which occurs when a person's moral judgment is influenced by that person's desire to perceive a given act or person as either moral or immoral. It is possible, for example, that feelings of jealousy might lead to harsher moral judgments when the potential violations are described in terms of the respondent's romantic partner. There is further reason to suspect differences in moral judgment, given evidence that people tend to have higher expectations and standards for romantic partners compared to others (Fuhrman, Flannagan, & Matamoros, 2009). To explore this possibility, we analyzed

moral judgments for different targets, where we varied the person engaging the morally ambiguous relational behavior.

The current studies

We developed a questionnaire to tap into a variety of potential norm violations, ranging from dating-like behaviors (e.g., *going out to dinner and/or movie with someone other than a current partner*) to the boundaries of friendship and romance (e.g., *remaining friends with a recent ex-partner while in a relationship with someone else* and *dating a best friend's ex-partner*), to violations of privacy (e.g., *going through a partner's e-mail if there is suspicion of cheating*), and quasi-sexual behavior (e.g., *watching another person or couple masturbate/have sex while in a committed romantic relationship, with no physical contact or emotional intimacy*). We developed these items to reflect: (a) research novelty, that is, what new, intriguing, and perhaps controversial behaviors (e.g., *sexting*) have not yet been extensively investigated within relationships research, (b) anecdotal observations from students/colleagues/research assistants and popular cultural commentators (e.g., Chuck Klosterman) about norm violation in relationships, (c) behaviors that are not universally unacceptable (in other words, behaviors for which we could detect some variance in the degree to which respondents approve or disapprove these behaviors), and (d) behaviors that we were intrinsically motivated to study. In the initial phase of this research, we solicited ideas from students, friends, and professional colleagues through open brainstorming sessions about what behaviors they considered to be potentially but not definitively wrong in the context of relationships. Later, we circulated a draft of the questionnaire and solicited feedback from students and professional colleagues, particularly with regard to clarity in terminology and wording/phrasing, but we did not quantitatively pretest the survey items for severity, nor did we conceptually modify behaviors captured in the items (though we did modify grammar).

To test for motivated moral reasoning effects, we randomly assigned participants to one of the moral judgment targets, in a between-subjects design. For the purpose of these studies, the *target* refers to the person who is committing the behavior and the object of moral judgment in the study materials, *not* the behavior itself, nor the participant. In Study 1, we used two targets, the self (*Is it OK for you to . . .*) and a current, past, or imagined romantic partner (*Is it OK for your partner to . . .*). Study 1 drew on an Internet-based sample. We also assessed participants' moral foundations profiles and gender to examine how general moral cognition predicts judgments of relationship morality.

In Study 2, we used three additional targets, for a total of five, which included a best friend (*Is it OK for your best friend to . . .*), a generic man (*Is it OK for a man to . . .*), and a generic woman (*Is it OK for a woman to . . .*). We added the "best friend" condition, given previous research showing that people tend to hold higher standards for their romantic partners' behavior relative to close friends and added generic male/female target conditions to test the relative effects of judging average other (unknown) individuals. Study 2 drew on a convenience sample, and we incorporated an examination of

attachment styles and sociosexuality as relevant individual differences, in a convenience sample. We formed the following hypotheses:

H1a: Motivated moral reasoning and romantic jealousy. Participants will judge self targets less harshly than romantic partner and best friend targets for all ambiguous norm violations (Study 1) and less harshly than generic men/women (Study 2).

H1b: Participants will judge romantic partners more harshly than best friends (Study 2).

H1c: Participants will judge strangers (generic men/women) more harshly than best friends, but not more harshly than romantic partners (Study 2).

H2: Moral Foundations—Individuals higher in moral concerns on the dimensions of care, fairness, and purity will give harsher moral judgments toward all ambiguous norm violations (Study 1).

H3: Attachment styles—Individuals higher in attachment anxiety and individuals lower in attachment avoidance will have harsher moral judgments toward all ambiguous relational norm violations (Study 2).

H4: Sociosexuality—Individuals with an unrestricted sociosexual orientation will give more lenient judgments toward all ambiguous relational norm violations, particularly for sexual or quasi-sexual behavior (Study 2).

H5a: Gender—Male and female targets will be judged differently according to the sexual double standard; sexual behaviors will be rated as more wrong when the target is a woman than when the target is a man (Study 2).

H5b: Gender—Male participants will judge sexual violations more harshly, while female participants will judge emotional violations more harshly (Studies 1 and 2).

Study 1

Participants

Participants in this study were 795 adult visitors (54% males; age $M = 36.50$; $SD = 15.12$, median = 32) to <http://YourMorals.org> – a Web platform¹ for psychological research where volunteer participants complete a variety of questionnaires after registering and providing basic demographics. Most participants (84.7%) identified as Caucasian, while others identified as African American (2.8%), Hispanic/Latino (4.3%), East Asian (3.4%), Middle Eastern (.6%), Native American (2.9%), South Asian (1.3%), other (2.3%), or declined to report (3.8%). The overlap in percentages indicates that some participants identified with multiple racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Materials and procedure

The key measure for this study was a 31-item questionnaire that we created to assess participants' attitudes toward the potential moral wrongness of a variety of relational behaviors (see Appendix A). For each item, participants were asked to rate whether the behavior in question was morally acceptable using a 1–5 Likert-type scale. With this

scale, a score above 3 indicated *moral approval*, and a score below 3 indicated *moral condemnation*. As stated above, we varied the surveys to reflect two different experimental conditions (self and partner). These different versions contained the same behaviors but with slightly different wording to coordinate grammatically with the different targets. Although there are limitations associated with asking participants to report their judgment of a hypothetical romantic partner's behavior, this research design has been successfully utilized before in experimental research on relationships (e.g., Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). Participants did not report any difficulty in responding to hypothetical partner items during the debriefing process.

Participants also completed the 30-item *Moral Foundations Questionnaire* (MFQ, Graham et al., 2011), which measures moral concerns related to each of the five moral foundations; the internal consistencies were similar to those obtained in the previous research using this questionnaire care ($\alpha = .65$), fairness ($\alpha = .64$), loyalty ($\alpha = .69$), authority ($\alpha = .75$), and purity ($\alpha = .84$). In this measure, participants indicate to what degree each of these concerns is relevant to moral judgments (e.g., *Whether or not someone was denied his or her rights* for Fairness) and their level of agreement/disagreement with statements reflecting the different foundations (e.g., *It is more important to be a team player than to express oneself* for Loyalty), on a 1–6 Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all* and 6 = *extremely*). A full list of items can be found at www.moralfoundations.org. The MFQ scale has shown a robust factor structure, validity, and reliability (see Graham et al., 2011).

Results and discussion

In our first set of analyses, we attempted to reduce our 31 potential violation behavior items to meaningful entities. Importantly, our goal for this research was not to develop a reliable scale; we simply wanted to reduce the likelihood of a Type 1 error due to multiple comparisons. To that end, we conducted an exploratory principal components analysis (PCA). Varimax rotation yielded a conceptually meaningful 4-factor solution: sexual threat (e.g., watching other people masturbate or have sex), emotional threat (e.g., keeping romantic memorabilia from previous relationships or ex-partners), friendship boundaries (e.g., dating a best friend's ex-partner), and privacy (e.g., looking through a partner's belongings).² Factor loadings are displayed in Table 1.

We had hypothesized that participants would judge potential moral violations more harshly for partner targets compared to self targets (H1a) and that female participants would judge emotional violations more harshly, but male participants judge sexual violations more harshly (H5b); see Table 2. We also hypothesized that participants would perceive these relational behaviors as more morally "wrong" if they were higher on the moral foundations of care, fairness, and purity (H2).

To reduce the likelihood of a Type 1 error due to multiple comparisons, we tested for all of the hypothesized experimental and correlational effects using a unified multiple regression analysis, with each of the moral foundation variables entered as continuous predictors (centered), while gender was entered as a categorical predictor

Table 1. Factor loadings for the exploratory principal components analysis (see Appendix A for actual items).

Item #	Sexual threat	Emotional threat	Friendship boundaries	Privacy
27	.84			
26	.84			
19	.81			
20	.81			
16	.80			
21	.78			
25	.60			
9	.60			
5	.59			
28	.57			
22	.54			
24	.52			
17	.45			
18	.42			
6		.76		
7		.75		
2		.72		
1		.69		
4		.66		
23		.59		
10		.58		
8		.50		
3		.48		
12			.90	
13			.86	
14			.84	
15			.83	
11			.67	
29				.89
30				.87
31				.34

and experimental condition (self vs. partner) as an effect-coded categorical predictor ($-1 = self$ and $1 = partner$). Results are displayed in Table 3.

The first outcome variable was sexual threat. When entered simultaneously, Purity emerged as a significant unique predictor ($\beta = -.52, p < .001$), as well as gender ($\beta = -.09, p < .001$), suggesting that those higher in purity concerns and women both judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target; $R^2 = .27, F(7, 785) = 40.37, p < .001$. The second outcome variable was emotional threat. Authority and Purity were significant unique predictors ($\beta = -.18, p = .001$ and $\beta = -.38, p < .001$, respectively) as well as gender ($\beta = -.08, p = .019$), suggesting that women and those higher in authority and purity concerns judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .24, F(7, 785) = 34.71, p < .001$. The third outcome variable was friendship boundaries. Again, purity and gender were significant unique

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for relationship morality factors based on experimental condition and gender, Study 1 ($N = 795$).

Relationship morality	Men		Women	
	Self condition	Romantic partner condition	Self condition	Romantic partner condition
Sexual threat	2.36 (.96) <i>n</i> = 205	2.38 (.97) <i>n</i> = 220	2.16 (.85) <i>n</i> = 193	2.23 (.95) <i>n</i> = 175
Emotional threat	3.29 (.89) <i>n</i> = 205	3.31 (.90) <i>n</i> = 220	3.20 (.85) <i>n</i> = 193	3.11 (.99) <i>n</i> = 175
Friendship boundaries	3.10 (1.08) <i>n</i> = 205	3.18 (1.16) <i>n</i> = 220	2.60 (.96) <i>n</i> = 193	2.73 (1.25) <i>n</i> = 175
Privacy	2.26 (.97) <i>n</i> = 205	2.71 (1.05) <i>n</i> = 220	2.46 (.91) <i>n</i> = 193	2.63 (1.01) <i>n</i> = 175

Table 3. Multiple regression predicting relationship morality based upon moral foundations, gender, age, and experimental condition, Study 1 ($N = 795$).

	Sexual threat	Emotional threat	Friendship boundaries	Privacy
	β	β	β	β
Care	-.01	.01	-.06	-.05
Fairness	-.02	-.02	-.03	-.03
Loyalty	.03	.06	-.06	-.06
Authority	-.01	-.17***	-.06	.07
Purity	-.52***	-.38***	-.27***	.09
Gender	-.09**	-.08*	-.19***	.05
Condition	.03	-.01	.05	.16***
	$R^2 = .27***$	$R^2 = .24***$	$R^2 = .17***$	$R^2 = .05***$

Note. Gender was coded as (1 = male, 2 = female); negative associations indicate that females judged behaviors as more morally wrong than males. Continuous predictors were centered according to the sample mean. Condition was an effect-coded variable representing the experimental condition assigned to participants, coded as (-1 = self and 1 = partner).

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

predictors ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$ and $\beta = -.19, p < .001$, respectively), suggesting that women and those higher in purity concerns judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .17, F(7, 785) = 23.37, p < .001$. The fourth outcome variable was privacy. None of the individual difference effects reached significance; only the experimental condition maintained a significant effect, such that participants judged these behaviors as more wrong with respect to themselves compared with their romantic partners ($\beta = .16, p < .001$), $R^2 = .045, F(7, 785) = 5.61, p < .001$.

Overall, the results from this study showed some weak evidence for motivated moral reasoning, although not in the predicted direction. Contrary to our hypothesis H1a, participants perceived privacy violations as more acceptable in the romantic partner

condition compared to the self. The experimental manipulation did not yield significant differences on any of the other categories of behaviors being judged. In essence, we found weak evidence for H1a. Participants' judgments of these behaviors depended greatly on their moral foundations profile, as well as their gender, more so than whom the target was. When controlling for the other moral foundations, the moral concern about purity was the most robust predictor of moral judgments, whether the target behaviors were sexual, emotional, or involving friendship boundaries, but concerns about care and fairness did not significantly predict those outcomes (partially consistent with H2). Independently, female participants viewed sexual behaviors, emotional behaviors, and friendship boundary violations as more wrong than male participants, (partially consistent with H5b). We return to a broader discussion of the findings in light of our hypotheses in the general discussion.

Study 2

Participants

Four hundred and twenty-six undergraduate students (287 women and 129 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.24$ years, $SD = 3.09$ years) at the University of Maryland fully participated in the study, advertised as a survey on moral norms in close relationships. Participants were recruited through subject pool participation in the psychology department at Maryland and for extra credit in intro-level social psychology courses. Just over half (54.7%) of participants reported being single (unattached), 9.6% dating casually, 31% dating exclusively, 1.6% cohabitating, and 1.6% engaged/married. Of those who reported being in a relationship, the median duration/length of the relationship was 11 months.

Materials and procedure

The items assessing morally ambiguous relationship behaviors were identical to the ones used in Study 1. We assessed attachment-related anxiety and avoidance using the 12-item Experiences in Close Relationships–Short Form Scale (ECR-S; Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007). The questionnaire assesses tendencies toward emotion and behavior in relationships, with items such as, *I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back* (avoidance; $\alpha = .79$) and *I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner* (anxiety; $\alpha = .75$). All ECR-S items were completed using a 1–5 Likert-type agree/disagree scale. We assessed sociosexuality using Simpson and Gangestad's (1991) 7-item Sociosexual Orientation Inventory. This measure includes both attitude items, such as *Sex without love is OK*, and behavioral items, such as *With how many different partners have you had sex (sexual intercourse) within the past year?*. We computed composite sociosexuality scores ($M = 36.63$, $SD = 42.32$) based on the weighted formula provided by the original study authors; our scores were comparable to normative scores from previous studies establishing the validity of the scale ($M = 68.51$ and 38.90 for men and women, respectively; $SD = 38.01$ and 26.90 , for men and women, respectively; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991).

Results and discussion

As with Study 1, we conducted an exploratory PCA analysis on the 31 relationship morality items. A 5-factor solution emerged, comparable to the 4-factor model from the previous study. An important exception was that 4 items from the original sexual threat factor broke off to form a 5th factor (Items 5, 16, 26, and 27). These items appeared to be conceptually similar to each other in that they all involved forms of sexual interaction via electronic devices (e.g., sexting and cybersex). Confirmatory factor analyses using Lisrel confirmed that a 5-factor model ($\chi^2/df = 5.45$; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .102) fit the data better than a 4-factor model ($\chi^2/df = 6.46$; RMSEA = .113); fit indices improved although model fit was still not optimal. As stated previously, our goals for this research were exploratory and did not involve scale development; we simply sought to condense the items into more manageable units to facilitate analysis. Thus, the fact that the factor structure did not entirely replicate is not of theoretical importance, and we retained the 5-factor solution for Study 2. We kept the original factor labels for the first 4 factors and labeled the 5th factor as digital infidelity.

We had hypothesized that participants would judge potential violations more/less harshly depending on whether the target is a friend, partner, or generic person (H1b and H1c) as well as whether the target is a male/female person (H5a). We had also hypothesized that those individuals higher in attachment anxiety would judge potential violations more harshly, while those individuals higher in attachment avoidance would judge less harshly (H3) and that those individuals with unrestricted sociosexual orientation would also judge less harshly (H4) and that female responders would judge emotional violations more harshly, while male participants judged sexual violations more harshly (H5b). As with Study 1, we tested for all of these effects using a unified multiple regression approach, with attachment and sociosexuality variables entered as continuous (centered) predictors, alongside gender and the effect-coded experimental condition variable (with the self condition as the reference group denoted by -1 value). Recall that moral judgment scores ranged from 1 to 5, with lower scores indicating moral condemnation and higher scores indicating moral approval. Thus, negative associations reported here indicate that individuals scoring higher on that predictor variable rated the behaviors as more wrong. Results are displayed in Table 4.

The first outcome variable was sexual threat. When entered simultaneously, sociosexuality and gender emerged as significant unique predictors ($\beta = .14, p < .01$ and $\beta = -.17, p = .001$, respectively), suggesting that women and those with a more restricted sociosexual orientation judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .08, F(8, 417) = 4.71, p < .001$. The second outcome variable was emotional threat. Attachment anxiety and avoidance were significant unique predictors ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$ and $\beta = .14, p < .01$, respectively), suggesting that those higher in anxiety and lower in avoidance judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .10, F(8, 417) = 5.77, p < .001$. In addition, participants were more likely to judge these behaviors as wrong in the partner condition ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$) and the generic man condition ($\beta = .13, p < .01$) but not the best friend condition ($\beta = .20, p < .01$).

The third outcome variable was friendship boundaries. Attachment anxiety was a significant unique predictor ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$), as well as attachment avoidance ($\beta = .12$,

Table 4. Multiple regression predicting relationship morality based upon attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, sociosexual orientation, gender, and experimental condition, Study 2 ($N = 426$).

	Sexual threat	Emotional threat	Friendship boundaries	Privacy	Digital infidelity
	β	β	β	β	β
Anxiety	.03	-.13**	-.14**	.06	-.10*
Avoidance	.07	.14**	.12*	-.10*	.14**
Sociosexuality	.14**	.07	.01	-.02	.06
Gender	-.17**	-.09 [†]	-.16**	-.09	-.23***
Partner condition	-.12 [†]	-.21***	-.05	-.01	-.03
Friend condition	.10	.20**	.06	-.06	.10 [†]
Woman condition	.10	.06	.07	.11+	.02
Man condition	-.01	-.13*	.01	-.08	-.06
	$R^2 = .08***$	$R^2 = .10***$	$R^2 = .07***$	$R^2 = .03$ ns	$R^2 = .10***$

Note. Gender was coded as (1 = male and 2 = female); negative associations indicate that females judged behaviors as more morally wrong than males. Continuous predictors were centered according to the sample mean. The experimental condition variable was effect coded, with the self condition as the reference (denoted by the -1 value).

[†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

$p = .01$) and gender ($\beta = -.16, p = .001$), suggesting that those who were female, higher in anxiety, and lower in avoidance judged these behaviors as more morally wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .07, F(8, 417) = 3.86, p < .001$. The fourth outcome variable was privacy. Although attachment avoidance was a significant unique predictor ($\beta = -.10, p = .044$), the overall regression model was not significant, $R^2 = .02, F(8, 417) = 1.51, ns$. The fifth outcome variable was digital infidelity. Attachment anxiety was a significant unique predictor ($\beta = -.10, p = .04$), as well as attachment avoidance ($\beta = .14, p < .01$) and gender ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$), suggesting that those higher in anxiety, those lower in avoidance, and women judged these behaviors as more wrong, independent of the target, $R^2 = .10, F(8, 417) = 5.94, p < .001$.

We did find that sociosexual orientation was the strongest predictor of judgments toward sexual behaviors (H4). We found some weak evidence for motivated effects, as participants judged emotional threats more harshly for romantic partners and generic male targets and less harshly for best friend targets (partially consistent with H1). However, the experimental variations did not yield significant effects for the other behavior categories, and furthermore, the one significant experimental condition effect observed in Study 1 (regarding privacy violations) did not replicate in this study. For emotional threats, friendship boundaries, and digital infidelity behaviors, attachment anxiety and avoidance yielded different moral judgment profiles—highly anxious people were more likely to judge these behaviors harshly, whereas highly avoidant people were more likely to have lenient judgments (consistent with H3). For sexual threats, friendship boundaries, and digital infidelity behaviors, female participants gave harsher moral judgments than did males (partially consistent with H5b), but male/female targets were

not judged significantly differently for any category of behaviors (inconsistent with H5a).

General discussion

In this research, we investigated people's perceptions of behaviors in close relationships as morally acceptable/wrong. We found evidence that these judgments were largely associated with individual differences in concerns about moral purity (Study 1), with attachment styles and sociosexual orientation (Study 2), and with gender (Studies 1 and 2). This research marks an important advance beyond previous work in the field of close relationships research, which has typically treated norm violations and betrayals as idiosyncratic and specific to conflicts within dyads (e.g., Finkel et al., 2002). We have new insights into what variables predict whether people consider ambiguous norm violations in relationships as wrong or acceptable.

In addition, this research advances morality research, which has almost exclusively focused on generalized abstract moral concerns and unrealistic thought exercises, rather than domain-specific contexts and everyday social relationships (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010). Thus, these studies expand our understanding of moral psychology beyond artificial scenarios where people imagine themselves in physically impossible or implausible dilemmas (e.g., trolley problems) and instead illuminate social situations and dilemmas that people may routinely experience in their close relationships.

We found support for most, but not all of our predictions. Consistent with our hypotheses, those higher in purity concerns were more likely to perceive a range of questionable relational behaviors as morally wrong. Interestingly, concerns about care, fairness, and loyalty (which may easily come to mind when imagining relationship betrayal/violations) did not significantly predict moral judgments toward the behaviors in our items. Building on MFT, this strengthens the view that purity concerns, which may be tightly associated with religious norms about sexual restraint and chastity, are the most crucial in predicting a variety of relationship morality norms. Whereas relationships research has often focused on equity and dyadic fairness norms (e.g., Bartz & Lydon, 2008), as well as empathy and perceived harm (e.g., Cohen, Schulz, Weiss, & Waldinger, 2012), the current data underscore the importance of using a perspective that goes beyond these variables. It appears that sensitivity to purity violations may be the best predictor of the extent to which people perceive behaviors as morally wrong in a relational context.

Not surprisingly, those with a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation were more likely to perceive questionable sexual behaviors as morally permissible, even controlling for attachment and gender. Those high in attachment avoidance perceived nonsexual behaviors as more permissible, whereas those high in attachment anxiety perceived these nonsexual behaviors as more wrong. Although these effects were small, they are consistent with prior research. Those high in avoidance are more likely to engage in deactivation strategies typically involving a denial of intimacy and relational needs, while resisting proximity to others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007), hence, a more libertine moral mind-set for relationships and more permissive attitudes toward potential norm violations. In contrast, those high in anxiety are more likely to engage in hyperactivation strategies typically involving excessive, energetic pursuit of proximity to others, along with a lack of confidence in others

(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007), hence, a harsher moral mind-set for relationships and less permissive attitudes toward potential norm violations. Like highly avoidant people, those with an unrestricted sociosexual orientation are more likely to have permissive attitudes toward casual sexual behavior (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991), hence their permissive mind-set specifically for potential sexual norm violations. These findings generate more theoretically relevant support for the idea that attachment styles and sociosexuality are implicated in perceptions of right and wrong in close relationships.

We had competing predictions for judgments from male and female participants and found that women consistently reported harsher judgments toward all categories of behaviors (except privacy), which included sexual and emotional behaviors, friendship boundaries, and digital infidelity (in Study 2). This is consistent with research showing that men generally have more permissive attitudes toward sexual behaviors, such as pornography consumption (Petersen & Hyde, 2010) and inconsistent with the idea that men are more vigilant toward sexual violations while women are more vigilant toward emotional violations (Buss et al., 1992). However, this interpretation should be tempered, given that the behaviors we included on our measure were ambiguous norm violations and it is not clear that participants necessarily conceptualized them as indicating infidelity.

We found weak evidence for motivated reasoning effects. The small effect observed in Study 1 did not replicate in Study 2, which suggests that people's judgments of the wrongness of these relational behaviors did not reliably differ for self or romantic partner targets. Participants in Study 2 rated emotional violations as more wrong for romantic partners and average men and less wrong for best friends. However, these effects were very small, accounting for 6% of the variance in judgment scores. The other null findings are largely inconsistent with existing theories and findings from the motivated reasoning and self-serving bias literatures (Ditto et al., 2009). A likely explanation for these small and unreliable effects is that when participants imagined whether the behaviors were morally wrong, they imputed their own perspective for other targets. If respondents simply imagined themselves engaging in the behaviors, regardless of the true target, this would effectively reduce any self-serving biases normally observed in previous research. In addition, we predicted that behaviors would be judged more harshly for female targets (consistent with research on the sexual double standard); yet we did not find evidence for this either. To some extent this is unsurprising, given the inconsistencies in previous research on this issue; double standard effects have not been consistently found in the literature (Marks & Fraley, 2005). However, this should also be interpreted cautiously because for the generic man and woman conditions, not all participants may have responded equally to the same prompts/stimuli (e.g., some may picture their father and some may picture a stranger). Future research should investigate possible differences in judgment toward male/female target based on whether the target is an authority figure (parent or celebrity) or peer/unknown, among other attributes.

Across the two samples, the factor structure of moral judgments was closely, but not perfectly replicated. Participants' judgments clustered together consistently according to whether they involved sexual behaviors (e.g., watching others masturbate/have sex), emotional engagement (e.g., saving romantic memorabilia from a previous partner), boundaries of friendship/romance (e.g., dating a best friend's ex-partner), and privacy violations (e.g., going through a partner's clothes or e-mail). A main difference was the emergence of a separate fifth

factor in the undergraduate sample (Study 2), which contained transgressions that were sexual but conducted via electronics without any physical contact (e.g., sexting). We suspect that the reason for this small divergence in factor structure across the two samples might be due to the fact that young adults have more direct experience with sexual interactions via new technologies and thus conceptualize these behaviors as part of a qualitatively different phenomenon. In contrast, the first sample comprised mostly of older adults, and they appeared to conceptualize all sexual transgressions as falling in the same category, regardless of whether they included digital communication.

It should be noted that the individual difference effects reported here are correlational, and we do not yet have a conclusive causal framework. It is likely that attachment and gender schemas develop first (perhaps as early as infancy in the case of attachment) and remain stable over time (Fraley, 2002; Zayas, Mischel, Shoda, & Aber, 2011). The onset of general moral foundations relative to relationship-specific morality is less clear, though moral intuitions do have developmental roots (McAdams et al., 2008). It is also possible that specific attachment-related experiences in young adulthood (e.g., being cheated on) may dictate stable moral attitudes toward these behaviors. In addition, the personality traits we chose to examine reflect those that are prominently featured and greatly studied within relationship science (attachment and sociosexuality) and morality research. Certainly there may be other variables of importance (e.g., neuroticism) that may be relevant to understanding moral judgment outcomes, and we suggest further research on these other potentially relevant traits. Furthermore, norms for relationship morality may be culturally mediated. That is, cultural norms may dictate what behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate in the context of relationships, and individuals then differ (in large part due to personality traits, life experiences, and situational forces) with respect to how much they endorse or reject those norms, just as with other general social issues like premarital sex. Future research should investigate these ideas further.

Another limitation is that our samples consisted of a volunteer sample of Internet users and a group of psychology undergraduates, both of which were self-selecting and might have intrinsic interest in psychology, morality, and/or relationships. Thus, we must cautiously interpret generalizability until similar results can be demonstrated with a probability sample replication. Nevertheless, our confidence in the obtained patterns is strengthened by the fact that our results were similar between the undergraduate sample and the larger/more diverse web sample. As with all research on moral norms, we must also be cautious in overgeneralizing across cultures, as there may be significant variation between our results and non-Western societies. While we have empirical and theoretical support for the cross-cultural validity of our key constructs, the precise pattern for moral judgments of ambiguous norm violations may vary for non-U.S. populations. We suspect that cultural variation might well exist in attitudes toward specific behaviors (e.g., cybersex), but the theoretical link between moral judgments toward those behaviors and underlying traits (e.g., attachment style and purity concerns) ought to be similar, given the cross-cultural applicability of the underlying theories.

The current studies are a promising exploratory foray into the area of relationship morality, but future work should examine how people process moral dilemmas and navigate ambiguous situations in their relationships as well as to examine how people's conception of these potentially immoral behaviors are associated with relationship

outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, longevity, and positive/negative emotion). Future research should also examine the consequences and resolutions following morally taboo behavior outside of dyads, depending on boundaries established within communities as well as situational forces. It is likely that decisions regarding potential transgressions have far-reaching implications for intra- and interpersonal functioning.

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Notes

1. The YourMorals.org website attracts adults and volunteer research participants in a variety of ways; most are referred by typing in key words related to morality and psychology into a search engine, others find out about it by word of mouth, the YourMorals Facebook application, or from online articles and blogs about psychological research on morality. Previous analyses have indicated that the patterns of findings do not vary depending on the referral source (e.g., Iyer, 2009). Before being allowed to take any surveys, visitors to the site are asked to register and provide basic demographic information. During this process, they are informed of the anonymity of their responses and the site's privacy and security policies with respect to participants' personal information and data. Before each survey an institutional review board (IRB) approval page is shown. After registering, participants are shown a semi-random selection of all studies posted on the website at the time, in a semi-random order (i.e., some studies are "featured" and are always shown while others appear with a prespecified probability). This limits the problem of self-selection, though as with most psychological research with volunteers some selection bias is unavoidable. Each survey is described with 1–2 sentences, which in this case stated, *What do you think about the following situations when they occur in the context of a serious relationship?*

With respect to the overarching issue of sampling bias, the creators of yourmorals.org have argued that the site samples from a far more diverse population than when one is using the typical college student samples, especially in terms of age and relationship status. Furthermore, a number of basic patterns obtained using YourMorals data (e.g., relationships among morality, political ideology, gender, personality, etc.) have been replicated with nationally representative U.S. samples (see Graham et al., 2013, for a more complete discussion) or themselves replicate previous findings from the psychological literature.

2. Oblimin's rotation yielded an identical set of factors. In addition, given that this was a between-subjects design (some participants received different versions of the questionnaire than others), we also ran the principal component analysis separately for both the "self" and "romantic partner" conditions. The factor structures that emerged in this analysis were identical across both experimental conditions.

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Appendix A

Moral wrongness of relationship behaviors

This version of the questionnaire was phrased such that participants answered questions about their own behaviors. The questions were tweaked to reflect the different experimental conditions for other participants.

Instructions to participants: The following survey is designed to assess *moral attitudes* and a *moral code of conduct* for *friendships and romantic relationships*. We are especially interested in your beliefs about what is OK and not OK to do when two people are in a serious romantic relationship. Think about your current romantic relationship, if you are in one. If you are single, imagine what you would feel and think if you were in a serious romantic relationship with someone. Please think about how you'd feel about these behaviors with respect to your OWN relationship and your OWN partner, not with respect to romantic couples in general.

For each of the following questions, ask yourself, is this behavior something that is acceptable to do, or is it morally wrong? Answer each question on a 1–5 scale:

1 = *Never or Almost Never OK*, 2 = *Mostly not OK*, 3 = *Sometimes OK*, 4 = *Mostly OK*, 5 = *Always or Almost Always OK*.

1. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to go out to dinner and/or a movie with a friend of the opposite sex, just the two of you?
2. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to give your phone number to another person of the opposite sex at a party, with the intention of being friends/hanging out (no intention of cheating)?
3. Is it OK for you to break off plans with a romantic partner in order to be with a same-sex friend?
4. Is it OK for you to break off plans with a romantic partner in order to be with an opposite sex friend?
5. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to join an online dating website, (admitting that you are *not* single in your dating profile)?
6. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to have an online pen pal of the opposite sex, who lives across the world (low likelihood of ever meeting in person)?
7. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to have an online pen pal of the opposite sex, who lives nearby (high potential of meeting in person)?
8. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to save romantic memorabilia (e.g., gifts and cards)
9. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to save sensual/sexual memorabilia (e.g., pictures and videos) from an ex?
10. While in a serious relationship is it OK for you to remain very close friends with a recent ex (e.g., you hang out one-on-one, confide in each other, communicate regularly, etc.)?
11. Is it OK for you to be close friends with your ex-partner's best friend?
12. Is it OK for you to date with your ex-partner's best friend?

13. Is it OK for you to have sex with your ex-partner's best friend?
14. Is it OK for you to date your best friend's ex-partner?
15. Is it OK for you to have sex with your best friend's ex-partner?
16. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to engage in "cybersex" (engaging in overtly sexual and explicit discussions and/or role playing with someone over the Internet) with another person, with no physical contact or emotional intimacy?
17. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to watch erotic/pornographic videos, by yourself?
18. Is it OK for you to have an "open relationship" (a relationship where both partners are allowed to have sexual contact with other people) with your partner, as long as you both agree on it?
19. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to watch another person masturbate (with their consent, and with no physical contact between you and the people you are watching)?
20. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to watch other people having sex (with their consent and with no physical contact between you and the people you are watching)?
21. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for someone else to watch YOU masturbate, with your consent (with no physical contact between you and the person that is watching you)?
22. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to engage in nonsexual cuddling with another person of the opposite sex (not in your family)?
23. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to sleep in the same bed (but no touching at all) with another person of the opposite sex (not in your family)?
24. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to kiss on the mouth of a person of the same sex as part of a game or on a dare (no physical or emotional attraction between you and the person that you are kissing)?
25. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to kiss on the mouth of a person of the opposite sex as part of a game or on a dare (no physical or emotional attraction between you and the person that you are kissing)?
26. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to send nude pictures to another person?
27. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to receive nude pictures from another person?
28. If you are in a serious relationship, is it OK for you to think about someone else while having sex with your partner?
29. If you are in a serious relationship, is it ever OK to go through a partner's physical belongings (e.g., wallet/pockets/purse) if you suspect them of cheating?
30. If you are in a serious relationship, is it ever OK to go through a partner's digital belongings if you suspect them of cheating?
31. If you are in a serious relationship, is it ever OK to borrow some cash from a partner's wallet without their explicit permission if you intend to return the money soon?