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The Relation of Co-Rumination to Romantic Relationship Quality

by

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Honors Thesis

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Abstract

The current study looked to evaluate the correlation between co-ruminating in young adult friendships and the quality of a romantic relationship by addressing the topic of co-rumination between the dyad. One hundred-thirty three (N=133) introduction to psychology students (24 male and 109 female) were measured on their extent of co-rumination with a close friend and quality of romantic relationship. Previous research had not addressed what topics were being discussed during co-rumination but it can be speculated that the issues differ since certain relationships are leading to different types of maladaptive outcomes. A negative correlation was found between co-ruminating about romantic relationships and romantic relationship quality. No moderating effect of gender was found. This is consistent with previous research which suggests that co-ruminating with a friend may induce heightened feelings of closeness within the friendship, it may also be negatively related to the quality of the romantic relationship.

The Relation of Co-Rumination to Romantic Relationship Quality

Romantic relationships commonly begin in early adolescence with reports indicating that about 36% of thirteen-year-olds have had a romantic partner within the last 18 months and this figure nearly doubles to 70% by age 17 to mid-twenties (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006). Involvement in a romantic relationship has shown to lead to positive adjustment and increased levels of perceived support (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). Furthermore, romantic relationships in adolescence provide individuals with an increased opportunity to socialize with the opposite sex and learn common cultural norms about dating. Since a significant amount of adolescents are engaging in romantic relationships it is important to address the quality of the relationship. Romantic relationship quality generally refers to the degree in which a dyad feels they have positive and beneficial experiences (Collins, 2003). In high quality romantic relationships partners portray apparent signs of intimacy, affection, and nurturance, while couples with low romantic relationship quality show increased amounts of irritation, animosity, and conflict (Rotowsky, Galliher, Welsh, & Kawaguch, 1998). Correspondingly, high quality romantic relationships in early adolescence have been linked with an increased likelihood of positive relationships and relationship commitment in early adulthood (Seiffge-Krenke & Lang, 2002). Like friendships, romantic relationships have been correlated with positive characteristics such as closeness, companionship, and commitment (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992); however, there are also some negative aspects of adolescent romantic relationships with research indicating that interactions with a romantic partner contain more conflict and less responsiveness than interactions with a friend or mother (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). This shows that

there are positive and negative consequences of engaging in a romantic relationship during adolescence.

Most romantic relationships begin in the adolescent's peer group since they are exposed to more people of the opposite gender, and thus increasing the likelihood for socializing to occur (Dunphy, 1963). Furthermore, adolescents in a peer group have the opportunity to observe how others in their group interact with one another and can also model their behaviour. The similarities between friendship and romantic relationships in adolescents suggest that there may be congruence between the quality of relationships, meaning that adolescents with intimate friendships should develop more intimate romantic relationships (Connolly & Goldberg, 1999). The purpose of the present study is to further explore the link between the friend and romantic contexts by examining the use of co-rumination in late adolescent friendships and romantic relationship quality.

One of the important predictors of relationship quality among friends is co-rumination. Co-rumination is a construct where two people repeatedly discuss the personal problems of one person in the relationship (Rose, 2002). Furthermore, co-rumination is characterized by a focus on negative feelings with no attempt at a solution. For example, if a girl's romantic relationship ends against her wishes, she may repeatedly discuss her feelings of sadness with another female friend about the breakup, without exchanging any new information or attempting to resolve any maladaptive feelings.

Unlike self-disclosure, which can be considered a positive method of sharing personal thoughts and feelings, co-rumination solely focuses on the negative and thus has been linked to internalized problems like anxiety and depressions (Rose, 2002). Research also indicates that

during early adolescence females are at greater risk for depression (Kessler, et al. 1993, Pigott, 1999), even though they report higher levels of social support and closer friendships which are considered buffers against these internalized disorders (Burda, Vaux, & Shill, 1984, Bukowski, Newcomb, & Harrtup, 1996). This incongruence may be partly explained by co-rumination because, while it is true that high levels of social support and self-disclosure are buffers for internalized symptoms, if there is no attempt at a solution or no problem-solving behaviour occurs, then these behaviours can actually be detrimental.

Research conducted by Calmes and Roberts (2008) compared co-ruminating in relationships with a close friend, roommate, parent, and romantic partner. They found that co-ruminating with a roommate or romantic partner did not lead to anxious or depressive feelings, but co-ruminating with a close friend did. Perhaps co-rumination with close friends is more passive, repetitive, or negative compared to co-rumination in romantic relations (Calmes and Roberts, 2008). It is also possible that the problems discussed with a friend are more distressing, severe, or difficult to control which in turn induces the individual to feel more depressed than he or she would in a less serious problem. Waller (2005) reported that parental co-rumination was associated with having an enmeshed relationship with one's parents, which in turn, could contribute to emotional distress. This reasoning could also be applied in terms of a close friendship, since co-ruminating with a friend also yielded poor adjustment and is also a relationship with a deep connection. Romantic relationships, especially in adolescence, are logically more recent than a friendship and thus one may feel more comfortable sharing personal information with an old friend that he or she trusts, opposed to a new boyfriend or girlfriend that is just beginning to learn about the individual. On the converse end of this rationale is the notion

that co-rumination in a romantic relationship is more supportive than a friendship and thus does not lead to maladaptive thoughts and feelings. Perhaps a romantic couple is more physical, such as touching or hugging, while co-ruminating and consequently not only feels more emotionally secure but physically secure as well. Nevertheless, it seems that co-rumination with friends has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health and adjustment. What remains unknown to date is the effect of co-ruminating with a friend about other relationships outside the individuals in the dyad.

A large amount of information and behaviour regarding romantic relationships in adolescence is learned from friends, meaning a friend's opinion can influence a romantic relationship by indicating which partners are acceptable (Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park, & Vernberg, 2002), or provide a framework to learn and develop social skills leading to intimate relationships (Connolly & Goldberg, 1999). This suggests that friendships play a major role in romantic relationships. Simon, Eder, and Evans (1992) found that adolescent females' romantic involvement and the cultural norms they follow are highly influenced by other female friends. Furthermore, their study promotes the notion that feelings and expression are partially constructed by social relations, meaning that the heightened value adolescent girls place on romantic relationships is learned from other females who consider these values to be important. In addition, research performed by Connolly and Johnson (1996) firstly showed that adolescents' perceptions of support in romantic relationships correlates with perceptions of support with a parent and with a best friend. Secondly they found that the presence of a boyfriend or girlfriend did not alter adolescents' perceptions of relationships with their best friend or parent. In short, these findings propose that previous relationships can shape future romantic relationships, which

is consistent with the formerly stated idea that an individual may feel more comfortable confiding more serious problems with a parent or friend since these relationships were formed first. While friendships develop important social skills of intimacy and communication, it can become problematic when friends discuss romantic issues in a non-constructive manner, which as co-rumination has demonstrated, can lead to negative consequences such as aggression or violence. For example, Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmille, and Yoerger (2001) have shown that males' aggression towards their girlfriends is associated with recent hostile discussions about women with a close friend.

Research performed by Rusbult and Arriaga (1997) showed that those in close relationships strive to maintain interactions that are rewarding. In a like manner, intimacy and co-rumination are considered to be rewarding because they lead to an increase of perceived closeness in the relationship which shows a positive feature of engaging in co-rumination (Rose, Carlson, & Waller, 2007). Additionally, studies conducted by Etcheverry and Agnew (2004) found that individuals are more likely to continue in their romantic relationship when they believe their friends think the relationship will last. For example, if two female friends are co-ruminating about problems with one's romantic relationship, the listener may come to feel that the romantic partner of her friend is not an appropriate match, since she has spent so much time engaging in the co-ruminating process and discussing the problems of the relationship. Thus while the listener may have initially been attempting to be objective and supportive, by dwelling on the negative aspects of the romantic relationship, the listener may also unknowingly be conveying her disapproval of the romantic relationship and further influencing her friend. With this in mind it is important to note a major limitation of past research on co-rumination is that the

topics being discussed were not addressed. Therefore, it can be speculated that the issues differ since certain relationships are leading to different outcomes.

The current study evaluates the correlation between co-ruminating with a close friend and the quality of a romantic relationship by addressing the topic of co-rumination in the dyad. It is predicted that co-ruminating with a close friend about a romantic relationship will in turn decrease romantic relationship quality. Co-ruminating on a topic is related to negative effects on cognitive processes and behaviour, suggesting co-ruminating with a friend about dating may lead to increased negative thoughts about the relationship or more problematic behaviours. This was demonstrated in a study conducted by Rudiger and Winstead (2013) who investigated women co-ruminating about physical appearance or dieting and exercise. They found that co-ruminating about this specific topic lead to disorders of body image and eating. This demonstrates why it is important to address what a dyad is co-ruminating about, since certain topics may lead to specific negative consequences opposed to poor maladjustment in general.

This is also consistent with Rose's (2002) research which found that girls are more likely to co-ruminate than boys because high levels of co-rumination among girls may maintain high quality and closer friendships among girls through self-disclosure processes, but they are simultaneously exposed to greater internalizing problems through ruminative processes. Whereas with boys, lower levels of co-rumination may help decrease the ruminative behaviour, but they may not have as high quality and close friendships due to their minimal self-disclosure (Rose, 2002). Moreover, Starr and Davila's (2009) research found that romantic experience served as a moderator for co-rumination and depression, meaning that co-rumination predicted increases in depressive symptoms for girls with more romantic experience.

In general, identification of people who co-ruminate is important because it addresses a group that may otherwise be overlooked, since they are perceived as having a high level of social support when in reality this “support” may be initiating detrimental effects and maladaptive feelings. More specifically, co-ruminating in a friendship may misconstrue the level of satisfaction within a romantic relationship, which could potentially lead someone to engage in or terminate a romantic relationship rather than actively resolving any relationship issues. In sum, if co-rumination has a negative correlation with quality of romantic relationship then people can be made aware that repeatedly discussing problems about a romantic relationship with a friend may make you feel closer to that friend, but may be simultaneously harming the romantic relationship.

Method

Participants

This study consisted of 133 psychology students from King’s University College (109 female and 24 male) to examine the relationship between co-ruminating in friendships and quality of the romantic relationship. All participants in this study were at least 18 years and older with an age range of 18 to 43 years and the average age being $M = 20.08$, $SD = 4.11$. This study aims to examine the communication in friendships and romantic relationships of the cohort labelled “emerging adults” consisting of 18 to 25 years of age; however, seven participants were older than 25 years and were still included in the study. Female participants in the sample ranged from 18 to 43 years with an average of $M = 20.02$, $SD = 4.33$, while males ranged from 18 to 30 years with an average age of $M = 20.38$, $SD = 2.95$. Participants of this study were required to have been in a romantic relationship within the past year that lasted a minimum of three months. Participants were recruited through the SONA system, a website that posts studies being offered and their available time slots. The sign-up poster on the SONA system includes the description

of the study, eligibility requirements and approximately how long the study will take to complete. Basic demographic information was collected including age, age of first romantic relationship, sex, and if the participant is currently in a romantic relationship. Furthermore, questions regarding time and length of previous and current romantic relationships were included to ensure that these relationships were considered to be serious and important. Students participating in the online questionnaire could also complete a small research assignment related to the study that contributed 2.5% bonus to their final mark in their Introductory to Psychology course. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time and could still receive credit for the written assignment. After participants had consented to the study, they were asked to complete the Co-Rumination Questionnaire (Rose, 2002), and the Quality of Relationships Inventory (Pierce, 1991).

Materials

Co-rumination questionnaire. Two questionnaires will be required to perform this study. The first is the Co-Rumination Questionnaire (Rose, 2002) a 26-item scale, which was used to determine the extent the participant co-ruminates with a same sex close friend. The Cronbach's alpha was found to be .97 showing the scale has very good internal reliability. The items in the questionnaire have been adapted to relate specifically to problems in the romantic relationship (see Appendix A) opposed to the original questionnaire which examined general life problems. The Co-Rumination Questionnaire is scored on a 5 point Likert-scale, by indicating the extent to which the statement best describes the participant with 1= *not at all true*, 2= *a little true*, 3= *somewhat true*, 4= *mostly true*, and 5= *really true*. Examples of the types of statements include, "We spend most of our time together talking about the romantic problems that my friend

or I have,” and “If one of us has a problem in our romantic relationship, we will talk about the problem rather than talking about something else or doing something else.”

Quality of relationships inventory. The Quality of Relationships Inventory (Pierce, 1991) is a 28 item scale that measures the participant’s perceived availability of social support from a romantic relationship, and the extent to which the relationship is viewed as positive, important, and secure. The Cronbach’s alpha was found to be .92. The scoring for the questionnaire is based from a Likert-scale with anchors including “*never*,” “*hardly ever*,” “*sometimes*,” “*many times*,” and “*most of the time*.” Examples from the Quality of Relationships Inventory include, “To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry at someone?” and “How positive a role does this person play in your life?”

Procedure

After participants signed-up for the study, an email was sent to them containing the link to access the survey. The email also explains that participants have 16 hours to complete the study once their time slot begins and that the study should take them under 30 minutes to complete. To access the survey, participants had to login to the website <https://surveys.adt.its.uwo.ca> with their uwo username and password. From there, the participants were asked to answer each question on the survey by indicating the extent of their agreement. Once participants had finished the survey, a debriefing form automatically appeared on screen that explained the purpose of the study. The researcher and advisor’s contact information were provided on the form in case the participants had any questions or concerns.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Preliminary analyses revealed that the average age of the first romantic relationship participants were involved in was 15.49 years ($SD= 1.82$) with a range of 7 to 20 years. The average number of relationships experienced was 2.65 ($SD= 1.76$) with a range from 1 to 12 relationships. Furthermore it was found that the average length of participants who were currently in a romantic relationship was 25.54 months ($SD= 31.27$) and the average length of participants who responded about a past relationships was 13.52 months ($SD= 11.64$). The majority of participants were in an opposite sex romantic relationship ($n=130$) while only 3 participants reported being in a same sex romantic relationship.

Correlations and Gender Differences among Variables

Correlations were computed among each of the variables of interest and are presented in Table 1. Results indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between co-rumination and quality of relationship suggesting that the more a person co-ruminates about a romantic relationship with a close friend the more likely the romantic relationship will be negatively affected. A significant negative correlation was also found between co-rumination and length of current relationship implying the more a couple engages in co-rumination the less likely the relationship will sustain. Lastly a significant positive relationship was found between age and number of relationships, as well as age and length of current relationships, suggesting that the older a person is the more relationships the he or she has experienced and is also more likely to have longer romantic relationships.

A series of independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in the variables of interest in this sample. Females ($M= 2.59$) reported significantly higher levels of co-rumination than males ($M=2.12$), $t(130)= 2.42$, $p<.05$. No other gender differences were

Table 1

Correlations Between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Co-Rumination	-					
2. Quality	-.17*	-				
3. Age	-.05	-.09	-			
4. Age of First Relationship	.13	.09	-.06	-		
5. Number of Relationships	-.05	-.13	.56**	-.48**	-	
6. Length of Current Relationship in Months	-.22*	-.14	-.52**	-.20	.22*	-
7. Length of Past Relationship in Months	.06	.06	.17	-.15	-.22	.94

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

found. The second t-test examined differences between relationship status. Individuals who were reporting on a current relationship ($M= 4.15$) were found to have high relationship quality $t(129) = 6.47, p < .001$ and lower co-rumination ($M= 2.40$) $t(130) = -2.03, p < .05$.

Hypothesis Testing: Predicting Quality of Relationships

One hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine whether co-ruminating with a close friend about a romantic relationship was related to the quality of the romantic relationship and is presented in Table 2. For the regression analysis the predictor variables were entered in three blocks; (a) gender and age, (b) co-rumination, (c) two-way interactions testing moderating effects of gender and age.

The regression analysis was computed to determine if co-ruminating with a close friend about a romantic relationship could predict the quality of the romantic relationship. This model was not significant, $F(3, 130) = 1.79, n.s.$, and accounted for 4% of the variance in age, sex, and co-rumination. Neither age nor sex predicted the quality of relationship $\beta = -.095, n.s. t(130) = -1.08, SE = .016$. However, co-rumination did predict the quality of relationship with $\beta = -.175, p < .05, t(130) = -1.98$. No significant interaction was found between co-rumination and sex.

Discussion

The results of this study are consistent with the main hypothesis that co-ruminating with a close friend about romantic relationship is related to negative quality of the romantic relationship. Moreover, results indicated that participants with high levels of co-rumination with a close friend were more likely to have a shorter romantic relationship. Age was also related to number of relationships and length of relationships suggesting that the older a person is the more relationships the individual has experienced and is also more likely to have a longer romantic

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Model	Variable	B	SE	β
1.	Age and sex	-.02	.02	-.10
2.	Co-rumination mean	-.15	.08	-.18*
3.	Sex x Co- rumination	-.24	.21	-.40
4.	Age x Co- rumination	.01	.03	.24

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

relationship. Furthermore, it was found that females tend to co-ruminate more than males; however, sex did not moderate the relationship between co-ruminating with a close friend and quality of the romantic relationship.

The correlation between co-ruminating with a close friend and quality of a romantic relationship suggests that consistent negative focus on dating problems can be detrimental to the romantic relationship even when one is simply disclosing with a friend. This negative link may be due to sharing concerns about the romantic relationship with a friend instead of the partner, even when the partner may not be aware of the problems. Additionally, this lack of communication could also insinuate the individual is not comfortable sharing his or her feelings with the partner, or that the romantic relationship is not as stable as the friendship. This is consistent with previous literature (Rose, 2002; Calmes & Roberts, 2008; Starr & Davila, 2008) which suggests that co-rumination is associated with positive aspects of friendship, such as closeness, however it is also simultaneously maladaptive in other areas as can be seen in the quality of the romantic relationship. While prior research has identified the construct of co-rumination (Rose, 2002) it has not addressed what individuals are co-ruminating about. As previously mentioned it was found that the majority of adolescents have engaged in some sort of a romantic relationship (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006), and in addition to this adolescents are more likely to co-ruminate than children (Rose, 2002). In a like manner, because adolescents are at a significant time developmentally for forming and maintaining new relationships, it is rational for adolescents to engage in co-ruminative processes about romantic experiences. For this reason, this study focused directly on problems within a romantic relationship opposed to general life problems. Identifying the topic the dyad is co-ruminating

about may help in predicting consequences with external behaviour or other relationships. For example, students who co-ruminate about their academic standing may have a negative perspective regarding their academic experience (Landphair & Preddy, 2012), but feel they have a high quality romantic relationship that is supportive and satisfying. Therefore, while most of the literature thus far suggests co-ruminating leads to general depressed and anxious feelings, it is important to target the topic of co-rumination so that explicit outcomes can be recognized. More specifically co-ruminating in a friendship may misconstrue the level of satisfaction within a romantic relationship, which could potentially lead someone to engage in or terminate a romantic relationship rather than actively resolving any relationship issues.

Furthermore, this study provides further support for the notion that friendships can influence romantic relationships. In the case of co-ruminating with a close friend, the friend is attempting to be supportive to the individual by agreeing about the problem and encouraging the individual to keep discussing the problem. This discussion becomes cyclical in nature thus making it difficult to form any new perspectives regarding the situation. Therefore, a problem that initially started out as a minor concern or complaint can escalate into a major issue requiring immediate or drastic action after a few sessions of co-rumination. The changes an individual makes in response to a co-ruminative process may not improve or be beneficial for the situation, but because an objective point of view was not taken it may appear as if it was the best decision.

Results showed that females tend to co-ruminate more than males which is consistent with the previous literature (Rose, 2002), however no moderating effect of gender was found. It is possible that in this sample no gender differences were found because the romantic relationships of males and females who co-ruminate are equally affected in the same manner,

meaning that the process of co-ruminating on romantic problems decreases the quality of the relationship for both men and women. That being said, it is also possible that the lack of male participants made it difficult to obtain enough power for the study to find any significant gender differences. Comparatively, previous research has found gender as a mediating variable (Rose, 2002; Calmes & Roberts, 2008) which partially accounts for some of the gender differences in emotional adjustment and friendships. This too seems to be an accurate depiction of gender differences in co-rumination since girls are more likely than boys to feel closer to friends when they co-ruminate while also having increased anxiety and depressive symptoms.

A limit of the study is the lack of male participants which made it difficult to examine gender differences. Furthermore, this study aimed to target young adults, however some mature students were included in the sample. Existing research on co-rumination (Calmes & Roberts, 2008) has acknowledged the directional problem of the correlation co-rumination has with maladaptive feelings such as anxiety and depression, meaning that it is not determined if one is depressed because he or she is co-ruminating or if one is co-ruminating because he or she is depressed. Therefore it is possible that an individual is co-ruminating as a result of being depressed or anxious, especially since depression is already connected to ruminative behaviour (Hart & Thompson, 1997). This reasoning could also be applied to co-rumination and romantic relationship quality, or as Rose et al. (2007) suggests, the correlation may be bidirectional.

Additionally, the sample consisted of participants who were reflecting on previous relationships opposed to solely including individuals who were in a current relationship. This may have affected the results since it is likely that old relationships ended because they already had a poor quality regardless of the co-rumination process. Due to time and financial constraints

this study only included one person's perspective of the co-rumination process and romantic relationship. In order to increase the overall reliability it would be beneficial to also include the closest friend and romantic partner's input to validate the relationships are significant and to ensure that their feedback is consistent with the another, since only having a single person's perspective could allow for biased or inaccurate information.

Much research is still required in regards to co-rumination. Future studies could examine other types of topics that are co-ruminative in nature, and how they are affecting specific relationships such as parents, siblings, or married couples. These topics could include discussing negative aspects of one friendship with another close friend or sibling, parents co-ruminating about problems their child is having in school, or a married couple consistently dwelling on negative aspects of their in-laws. From a clinical perspective, taking a proactive approach to make the habit of co-rumination more well-known could help decrease the amount of co-rumination occurring in the population. In addition to this, solution-focused intervention strategies (such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy or Solution Focused Brief Therapy) could be used to help individuals cease or prevent the co-rumination process, by addressing the ruminative conversations the person engages in and looking at different ways the problem could be resolved. From a biological perspective research is needed to see if any chemical changes in the brain occur while people engage in co-rumination. A study conducted by Bryd-Craven, Geary, Rose, and Ponzi (2008) observed that girls who engaged in co-rumination had significantly increased levels of cortisol. Other studies could look to replicate these results or search for other hormonal or chemical changes.

It is likely that the majority of people have engaged in co-rumination at one point or another, but it would be useful to know how prevalent co-rumination is among the population. Moreover, the majority of research conducted about co-rumination is in relation to adolescents, further research could be conducted with adults to see if similar results are found and how forming the habit of co-ruminating as a teen carries over to habits in adulthood. Due to the repetitive nature of co-rumination it could be speculated that chronic co-ruminators are unknowingly perpetuating similar problems over a long period of time. Although receiving support from a friend is a beneficial aspect of co-rumination, repeatedly dwelling on the negative topic problem is when the discussion becomes detrimental. Finally, while there is a negative correlation between co-ruminating with a close friend and romantic relationship quality, it is unknown how the repetitive negative discussion directly affects the relationship. Therefore, it appears that how a dyad communicates and the topics they discuss are relevant to finding a more solution focused intervention when dealing with romantic problems. Although co-rumination is a complex process examining the topic of co-rumination could aid in improving the quality of romantic relationships and potentially other significant relationships.

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Appendix A

Co-Rumination Questionnaire (Rose, 2002)

When We Talk About Our Problems

Think about the way you usually are with your best or closest friends who are girls if you are a girl or who are boys if you are a boy and circle the number for each of the following statements that best describes you.

1. We spend most of our time together talking about the romantic problems that my friend or I have.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

2. If one of us has a problem in our romantic relationship, we will talk about the problem rather than talking about something else or doing something else.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

3. After my friend tells me about a problem in his/her romantic relationship, I always try to get my friend to talk more about it later.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

4. When I have a problem with my romantic relationship, my friend always tries really hard to keep me talking about it.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

5. When one of us has a problem in our romantic relationship, we talk to each other about it for a long time.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

6. When we see each other, if one of us has a problem in our romantic relationship, we will talk about the problem even if we had planned to do something else together.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

7. When my friend has a problem with his or her romantic relationship, I always try to get my friend to tell me every detail about what happened.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

8. After I've told my friend about a problem in my romantic relationship, my friend always tries to get me to talk more about it later.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

9. We talk about problems in our romantic relationships that my friend or I are having almost every time we see each other.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

10. If one of us has a problem with our romantic relationship, we will spend our time together talking about it, no matter what else we could do instead.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

11. When my friend has a problem with his or her romantic relationship, I always try really hard to keep my friend talking about it.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

12. When I have a problem with my romantic relationship, my friend always tries to get me to tell every detail about what happened.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

When we talk about a problem related to a romantic relationship that one of us has....

1. ... we will keep talking even after we both know all of the details about what happened.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

2. ... we talk for a long time trying to figure out all of the different reasons why the problem might have happened.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

3. ... we try to figure out every one of the bad things that might happen because of the problem.

1 2 3 4 5
 Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

4. ... we spend a lot of time trying to figure out parts of the problem that we can't understand.

1 2 3 4 5

Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

5. ... we talk a lot about how bad the person with the problem feels.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

6. ... we'll talk about every part of the problem over and over.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

When we talk about a problem related to a romantic relationship that one of us has...

7. ... we talk a lot about the problem in order to understand why it happened.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

8. ... we talk a lot about all of the different bad things that might happen because of the problem.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

9. ... we talk a lot about parts of the problem that don't make sense to us.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

10. ... we talk for a long time about how upset is has made one of us with the problem.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

11. ... we usually talk about that problem every day even if nothing new has happened.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

12. ... we talk about all of the reasons why the problem might have happened.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

13. ... we spend a lot of time talking about what bad things are going to happen because of the problem.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

14. ... we try to figure out everything about the problem, even if there are parts that we may never understand.

1 2 3 4 5

Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True

15. ... we spend a long time talking about how sad or mad the person with the problem feels.

1 2 3 4 5
Not At All True A Little True Somewhat True Mostly True Really True