Speak More While Revealing Less: Effect of Rejection on Self-Disclosure

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Background
Psychological research has shown that after an individual experiences social rejection, they may attempt to mitigate their negative self-image by increasing their self-disclosure. In this study, we examined the effect of social rejection on self-disclosure in response to a rejected partner.

Hypotheses
1) Previously Rejected individuals would reveal fewer self-disclosing statements than Accepted individuals.
2) Previously Rejected individuals would reveal more self-disclosure than Accepted individuals.

Method
Participants: 64 participants were divided into two groups: Rejected and Accepted.

Manipulation Procedure:
Participants were told that they would be paired with another participant, and that this participant would be or would not be a rejected participant.

Results
Accepted participants self-disclosed (SD) more than their partner, but rejected participants self-disclosed more than their partner. However, the difference was not statistically significant.

Discussion
Although the means were in the hypothesized direction, the effect of rejection on self-disclosure failed to reach statistical significance. One possible reason for this absence may be that the manipulation did not have the desired effect, possibly because the manipulation was relatively mild. Further research is needed to determine if rejected individuals felt obligated to respond in a way that was consistent with the manipulation characteristics.

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References