

Conflict in College Dating Relationships



1

Hooking Up vs. Dating

College environments usually have some aspect of hooking up (which is defined as casual sex) and dating. It is important to be aware of the costs and rewards of hooking up before engaging in those behaviors (Anders, et. al, 2020).

- Rewards of hooking up:** enjoyment, sexual freedom
- Costs of hooking up:** regret, ambiguity
- Other factors like alcohol can encourage hooking up behaviors. (Anders, et al., 2020).



2 Relational Turbulence

Relational Turbulence Theory describes the feelings of hurt or conflict in a relationship from outside influences.

Dating relationships contain **less** relational turbulence than married relationships (Brisini & Solomon, 2019).

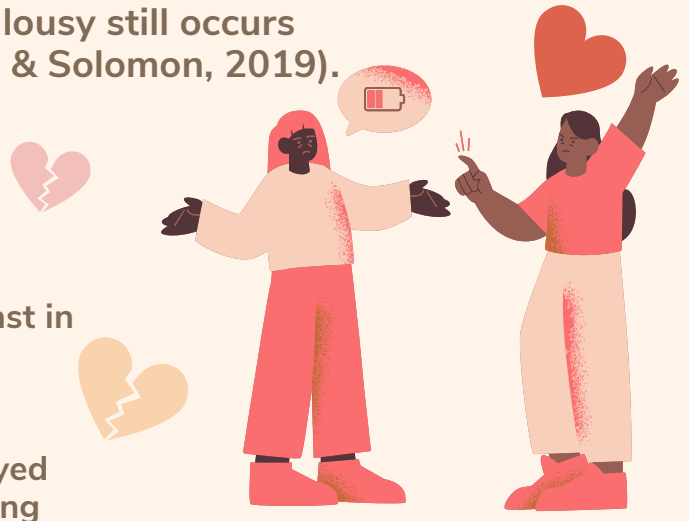
This is because dating relationships have shown to avoid conflict instead of addressing problems, however, the conflict of betrayal and jealousy still occurs (Brisini & Solomon, 2019).



3 Conflict from Betrayal

College daters have a lot of relational uncertainty because they do not know if their relationship will last in comparison to married couples (Brisini & Solomon, 2019).

When a couple is experiencing a betrayal, the betrayed are not easily swayed when just hearing the reasoning from the betrayer (Ferrara & Levine, 2009).



4 Conflict from Jealousy

As dating relationships increase in intimacy the likelihood of jealousy also increases.

Men's initial jealousy responses are:

loss of affection and rejection

Women's initial jealousy responses are:

anxiety, insincerity, inadequacy, and low self-esteem (Peretti & Pudowski 1997).

Female daters are **more likely** to experience jealousy than male daters (Peretti & Pudowski 1997).

Functional Ambivalence

Not one communication strategy was shown to work for couples that experienced betrayal. A combination of different communication strategies might work for different couples to move on from conflict (Ferrara & Levine, 2009).



5 Moving on from Conflict Communication

- Discuss with your partner the issues of conflict
- Display openness and understanding

Once you communicate your needs and voice the desire to continue the relationship, you can begin relational maintenance (Miller, 2022).

Relational Maintenance

-Practices that help keep a relationship in existence

Routine Maintenance Everyday actions

- Saying "I love you"
- Sending "thinking of you" texts

Strategic Maintenance Conscious behaviors

- Buying gifts
 - Planning a date night
- (Miller, 2022)



Citations:

Anders, K. M., Goodcase, E., Yazedjian, A., & Toews, M. L. (2020). "Sex is Easier to Get and Love is Harder to Find": Costs and Rewards of Hooking Up Among First-Year College Students. *Journal of Sex Research*, 57(2), 247-259. <https://doi-org.snc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1667946>

Brisini, K. S. C., & Solomon, D. H. (2019). Relational Turbulence in College Dating Relationships: Measurement, Construct Validity, and Comparison to Marriage. *Communication Quarterly*, 67(4), 424-443. <https://doi-org.snc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/01463373.2019.1605398>

Ferrara, Merissa T. and Levine, Timothy R. (2009). Can't live with them or can't live without them?: The effects of betrayal on relational outcomes in college dating relationships. *Communication Quarterly*, 57(2), 187-204. Miller, R. S. (2022). *Intimate Relationships*. McGraw Hill LLC.

Peretti, P. O., & Pudowski, B. C. (1997). Influence of Jealousy on Male and Female College Daters. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, 25(2), 155. <https://doi-org.snc.idm.oclc.org/10.2224/sbp.1997.25.2.155>