MOTIVATED STEREOTYPING OF WOMEN: SOURCES OF JUSTIFICATION FOR DEROGATING FEMALE THERAPISTS

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Previous research (Sinclair and Kunda, 2000) has shown that students and employees may rate female professors and managers who give them negative feedback more negatively than male counterparts who engage in the same behavior. This finding is thought to result from participants’ applying the stereotype that women are less competent than men to protect their threatened self-esteem. In the current research, I examined the potential for motivated stereotyping of women to occur within the context of psychological therapy. I expected female, more than male, therapists (portrayed through typed stimulus materials and a photograph) to be derogated by participants after providing negative feedback because doing so: a) activates participants' motivation to protect their self-esteem, b) allows for use of readily available negative stereotypes about women, and c) violates the expectation that females will be kind. However, negative feedback can be provided in a relatively kind manner and, therefore, not violate the female-gender-role expectation of kindness. Therefore, in the current research I varied the type of feedback (positive or negative) and the manner in which negative feedback (e.g., blunt negative feedback or negative but kind feedback) was presented. In addition to the primary dependent variable of derogation, I also assessed stereotype activation in order to examine the aforementioned process thought to underlie the derogation of professional women who provide negative feedback. Using a role-play methodology, 176 undergraduate students were randomly assigned to one of six conditions within a 3 [Type
of Feedback: (positive, blunt negative, negative but kind)] x 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] between-subjects factorial design.

Five hypotheses were proposed; however, none was supported. To the extent that the methodology allowed for a clear test of these hypotheses, it is possible that the female-dominated role of psychotherapist might be a context to which previously proposed theory and results do not apply. Thus, consistent with role congruity theory, females may avoid the previously documented patterns of motivated derogation within certain female-dominated professions (Eagly & Karau, 2002).
I dedicate this dissertation to my family…

to Dave without whom I would have never believed I could keep going;

to Mom and Dad who never stopped believing that I was capable;

to Micheal who never stopped those phone calls urging me on.
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INTRODUCTION

Psychotherapy is a field that entails diverse perspectives on which techniques (e.g., psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, experiential, eclectic, or integrative) should be used for the most effective therapy outcomes. Moreover, therapists come from many different training backgrounds (e.g., clinical psychology, social work, pastoral counselors), which can influence how they conduct their practice. However, despite these many different theoretical and practical approaches associated with conducting therapy, there are several aspects of the role of psychotherapist that are included and agreed upon within and across each of these perspectives.

Psychotherapy, in general, is defined as an “interpersonal process in which therapists communicate to their patients that they understand them, respect them, and want to be of help to them,” (Weiner, 1998, p. 3). People generally agree that the basic goals of therapy are to reduce emotional distress, help find solutions to problems in clients’ lives, and help clients change personality characteristics or behavior patterns that might be causing them difficulty. The key characteristics that therapists are expected to embody, despite their theoretical or academic background, are warmth (i.e., the ability to accept and value clients without judging them and create an atmosphere in which clients feel safe and secure), genuineness (i.e., the ability to be oneself in the therapy relationship), and empathy (i.e., the ability to understand their clients' needs and feelings). A primary goal of the psychotherapist is to help clients better understand themselves. This will not always be a “painless pursuit” in that negative feedback will oftentimes be necessary to help clients gain the best understanding of themselves (Weiner, 1998).

The therapeutic relationship is an important component of therapeutic progress, and any threats to this relationship are, therefore, highly clinically relevant (Lambert & Barley, 2001). In
the current research, I will discuss the implications of providing negative feedback to clients and present results from my research that examined whether people react differently to receiving negative feedback from male and female therapists. I will describe a body of literature that suggests that negative feedback from female therapists may prompt clients to stereotype these therapists as incompetent. If clients reject negative feedback by derogating their female therapists, they may not benefit from information that could potentially serve as a catalyst for changing their lives. Thus, in this research I sought to examine if clients derogate female therapists more so than male therapists after the therapist provides them with negative feedback, as well as explored a possible means by which female therapists may avoid this outcome.

Research on women in leadership roles suggests that those receiving negative feedback may activate the stereotype that women are less competent than men when female leaders provide negative feedback, and that they may do this as a means to protect their self-esteem after receiving the negative feedback (see Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). In the current study, I conceptually replicated and extended this research, which focused on reactions to feedback from managers, to reactions to feedback from therapists. I extended Sinclair and Kunda's research to therapeutic contexts by asking both basic and applied research questions. First, I hoped to elucidate the role of the motivated recruitment of stereotypes about women as a mediator of the relationship between receiving negative feedback from a female professional and the subsequent devaluing of these professionals. Second, by replicating this research within a therapeutic context I hoped to shed light on the potential consequences of providing negative feedback to clients, given that providing negative feedback is often necessary for clinical improvement (Weiner, 1998).
First, I will review the literature regarding ways in which people cope with threats to self-esteem, including the motivated recruitment of stereotypes. Next, I will review the literature on stereotypes about and gender-role expectations for women. In this context, I will summarize some of my own research on the expectations that people have for male and female therapists. I will conclude the literature review with a discussion of the possibility that providing negative feedback in a kind manner may be a way professionals can avoid derogation from clients after providing them with negative feedback.

Giving Negative Feedback to Clients

One aspect of the role of therapist is to provide negative feedback to help clients change behaviors and personality characteristics that cause them difficulty (Weiner, 1998). However, it is possible that receiving negative feedback from a professional woman will conflict with clients' expectations regarding how females typically behave or how they should behave. Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that a key difference between how people expect men and women to behave revolves around communal and agentic attributes. Communal attributes, such as “affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle,” (pp. 574) are most commonly associated with the female gender role. Agentic attributes, such as “assertive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and prone to act as a leader,” (pp. 574) are most commonly associated with the male gender role. Role congruity theory proposes that people will derogate females primarily 1) when they are in roles (e.g., manager, construction workers) that are inconsistent with the expression of communal attributes and 2) when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with female gender role expectations. Along these lines, the current research presupposes that the role of psychotherapist
necessarily involves that female therapists sometimes violate their clients' gender role expectations.

Reactions to Negative Feedback

Research suggests that it is important for clients to receive and accept negative feedback for changes in their behavior to occur (Tschuschke & Dies, 1997; Weiner, 1998). For example, if someone comes into therapy after a long history of bad relationships and it becomes apparent to the therapist that some of the ways that the client behaves in relationships may be responsible for some of their relationship difficulties then this client would benefit from this negative feedback, although it might be difficult to hear. However, people often have complex reactions toward people who provide negative feedback. Research suggests that when a writer is depicted as providing negative feedback about a source, as in the form of a negative book review, the reader rates the critic as being more intelligent but less nice than writers who provide positive feedback of the book (Amabile, 1983). Additionally, when listeners directly receive negative feedback from a speaker and then evaluate the speaker or the source of that personal feedback, their negative feedback from the speaker is consistently devalued (e.g., perceived as being less helpful) compared to positive feedback from the speaker (Robinson, Morran, & Stockton, 1986). Negative feedback is rated as less credible, less desirable, and as having less immediate impact on the receiver of the feedback than positive feedback (Jacobs et al., 1973). Importantly, listeners generally rate the provider of negative feedback more negatively than the provider of positive feedback (Harvey, Kelley, & Shapiro, 1956). Freeman (1973) provided participants with feedback, in the form of a falsified psychological test result, that was positive or negative and that differed in level of discrepancy (high or mild discrepancy) from participants' self-ratings. When the feedback was negative (regardless of how discrepant it was), participants were more
likely to derogate the source of the feedback. When feedback was positive, participants changed self-views to match the feedback (at least temporarily). Freeman interpreted this pattern of reacting to negative feedback as a method of protecting and bolstering self-esteem.

**How Do People Cope With Threats to Self-Esteem?**

In a seminal paper on cognitive dissonance theory, Elliot Aronson (1992) proposed that people have three core motivations, which are “. . . to preserve a consistent, stable, predictable sense of self . . . to preserve a competent sense of self . . . to preserve a morally good sense of self” (pp. 305). Receiving negative feedback is, therefore, often felt as a threat to self-esteem, in that it may make people question their self worth, skills, or morality. Thus, receiving negative feedback may interfere with the core motivation to preserve a competent sense of self, and people are strongly motivated to protect their self-esteem when faced with self-threatening information (Aronson, 1992). One way of protecting one's self-esteem in the face of negative feedback is to discredit the source of the feedback; thereby reducing its relevance to the individual. For example, in a study that presented individuals with negative information about their intelligence, participants generally responded by questioning the effectiveness of the intelligence test used and rejecting positive information about the intelligence test, thereby protecting their own (presumably positive) conceptions of their intelligence (Wyer & Frey, 1983).

Further, stereotyping others may sometimes function to protect or bolster self-esteem, in that people may stereotype others as a means of self-affirmation (Fein & Spencer, 1997). In a series of studies, Fein and Spencer demonstrated that when they induced participants to think about a value that was important to them and therefore experienced self-affirmation they did not use stereotypes in judging members of a minority group. However, when not provided the
opportunity to self-affirm, participants did use stereotypes to judge members of a minority group even though they had not had any negative interactions with the minority group members. Further, when self-esteem was threatened, individuals were more likely to evaluate another based on stereotypes, if stereotypes were available, and to distance themselves from a member of a stereotyped group (e.g., report not wanting to be the person’s friend). In this research, stereotyping occurred for members of a minority group despite the fact that the minority individual was not the one responsible for the threat to self-esteem. Moreover, the derogation of a member of a minority group increased feelings of self-esteem after receiving negative feedback. Thus, it appears that the use of stereotypes can serve the function of bolstering a person’s own self-concept in the face of negative information. It is also possible that had the self-esteem threat come from a member of a minority group these observed effects would have been even stronger.

Motivated Reasoning

According to the theory of motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990), people are often guided by one of two basic motivations when making decisions, processing information, and forming judgments: a motivation to arrive at an accurate conclusion or a motivation to arrive at a preferred conclusion (see also Baumeister & Newman, 1994). Kunda suggests that these motivations affect the way that individuals draw upon, construct, and evaluate their beliefs. Kunda proposes that when motivated to make accurate conclusions, people conduct a thorough search and draw upon a wide range of available evidence that is relevant to the situation. However, when motivated to arrive at a particular conclusion, people are more likely to draw upon whatever information most readily supports that conclusion. People appear to be particularly motivated to come to desired rather than accurate conclusions in areas regarding the
self (Aronson, 1992). In general, people are motivated to avoid threats to self-esteem and when so motivated may conduct a biased search of evidence to arrive at a conclusion that will protect their self-esteem. For example, when a person performs poorly on an exam, they may search for external explanations for this failure (e.g., the test was too hard) despite evidence that points to internal explanations that are often just as reasonable as external explanations (e.g., I only studied for 10 minutes and, therefore, it is my fault that I did poorly on that test).

There are, however, constraints on the conclusions that people may come to accept, in that they must be able to justify their conclusions to themselves and others.¹ For example, in one study designed to study constraints on motivated reasoning (Klein & Kunda, 1992), participants viewed another student successfully compete in a trivia game and were told that they would either compete against or cooperate with this person in an upcoming game. Participants who believed that the person would be an opponent, and thus were motivated to derogate the person’s ability, rated the person’s ability lower than those who believed this person would be their partner. However, participants made their judgments within the constraints of available evidence, in that the derogation of the opponent was weaker when there was more evidence demonstrating the person’s ability (8 versus 2 pieces of evidence). This research suggests that even when people are motivated to draw preferred conclusions they are also usually motivated to appear rational (see Kunda, 1990; Kunda, 1987).

In sum, the theory of motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990) attempts to explain how a number of cognitive processes (e.g., altering perceptions of one's own personal history, altering one's beliefs about how normative or important certain behaviors are) may be driven by the motivation to protect one's self-esteem. Among these motivated cognitive processes are those that might be used to justify derogating a source of negative feedback (Kunda, 1990).
Motivated Stereotyping

Stereotypes may be used to justify preferred conclusions about a source of negative information, and, in doing so, protect one’s self-esteem. For example, if someone receives negative feedback from an African American professional they may think, based on the stereotype that African Americans are unintelligent and incompetent, that the feedback is meaningless (see Sinclair & Kunda, 1999 for empirical documentation of motivated reasoning in this specific context). The theory of motivated stereotyping suggests that, within the constraint of appearing reasonable, individuals are often motivated to utilize information in whatever manner fits with their desired impressions of another individual. Thus, if a person is motivated to think highly of someone who has evaluated them, they may inhibit the activation of negative stereotypes about groups to which this person belongs. On the other hand, if someone is motivated to derogate an individual, such as after receiving negative feedback from this person, they may activate and apply any negative stereotypes that may be relevant to that individual (Kunda & Sinclair, 1999). In terms of the current research, I was interested in the motivated recruitment of negative stereotypes about women.

The current research was inspired by a series of studies conducted by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) that examined whether the stereotype that women are less competent than men is used to protect the self-esteem of individuals who have received negative feedback from a female in a position of leadership (e.g., professor, manager). In the first of these studies, the authors investigated whether female professors are derogated more so than male professors after providing low grades. In support of their hypothesis, the relationship between students’ grades and students’ evaluation of their instructors was stronger for female ($d = .52$) than male professors ($d = .24$). In other words, grades were predictive of evaluations for both male and
female professors; however, evaluations were more strongly associated with grades for female professors. Moreover, students only evaluated female professors more negatively than male professors when the grade received was negative. When the grade received was positive, there was no difference between how students evaluated male and female professors. In addition, students who received a low grade from a female professor were more dissatisfied with their grades than those who received a low grade from a male professor. This pattern of dissatisfaction suggests that students accepted low grades from male professors as legitimate but questioned the validity of low grades given by female professors (presumably because they elicited the stereotype that females are incompetent leaders). Together, the findings from Study 1 suggest that students derogate female professors when they are motivated to protect their self-esteem, such as after receiving poor grades.

In their second study, Sinclair and Kunda (2000) extended their correlational findings using a laboratory-based experimental methodology in which participants received bogus interpersonal feedback from either a male or female manager. As in Study 1, results indicated that after giving negative feedback both male and female managers were devalued (vis-à-vis those giving positive feedback) in terms of their ability to evaluate interpersonal skills, but female managers were devalued to a greater degree than males. Once again, there was no difference between the ratings of the male and female managers who gave positive evaluations. Results also indicated that when the managers gave negative feedback, participants were less satisfied with their own performance if the negative feedback was from a male rather than a female, which suggests that participants discounted feedback from the female manager (e.g., “It doesn’t matter what she thinks of me because she’s incompetent.”).
In a third study, Sinclair and Kunda (2000) investigated whether the previously documented derogation of female evaluators may have been due to surprise in receiving negative feedback (a cognitive versus a motivational interpretation) from a woman rather than an attempt to protect self-esteem. Results of this study indicated that when observing someone else receive negative feedback, wherein their own self-esteem is ostensibly not threatened and there is no need for self-protection, evaluations of male and female managers were similar. This result provides more support for the hypothesis that people may use stereotypes of women to discredit negative feedback from women so they can protect their self-esteem and helps rule out the purely cognitive interpretation that the documented derogation is simply due to surprise about females providing negative feedback.2

A Closer Look at Sinclair and Kunda’s Study 2

The current research was designed to replicate and extend Sinclair and Kunda’s (2000) Study 2. In this study, Sinclair and Kunda provided experimental evidence regarding a greater degree of derogation of female managers than male managers after they had provided negative feedback. The original aim of Sinclair and Kunda’s study was to demonstrate the motivated recruitment of the stereotype that females are less competent than males when self-esteem is threatened. However, they inferred this process of stereotype activation from the data; they did not explicitly examine the underlying processes. In fact, they did not measure general stereotype activation or stereotype endorsement at all. Rather, they asked participants to render judgments regarding the specific individual who provided the negative feedback. Thus, it is unclear if the stereotype that women, as a group, are less competent than men was truly activated or if people formed more specific beliefs about the particular woman who had rated them negatively. In other words, Sinclair and Kunda made inferences about the psychological process that was responsible
for their effect but they did not directly examine this process. Thus, one of the goals of the current research was to measure whether people activate stereotypes about women after receiving negative feedback from a woman.

In Sinclair and Kunda’s Study 2 (2000), participants provided two ratings of the specific manager that rated their interpersonal skills. Participants were asked to rate the overall competency of the manager, as well as the skill of the manager in judging interpersonal skills. Results indicate that participants did not judge female managers who provided negative feedback less competent overall; rather, they rated female managers who provided negative feedback as less skilled in judging interpersonal skills, specifically.

If participants were recruiting the stereotype that women are less competent than men in general one would expect them to have derogated the female managers' general competence. However, as noted, this did not happen. The authors explain this somewhat contradictory set of findings by suggesting that participants may have activated the stereotype that women are incompetent but used the stereotype to judge only specific behaviors rather than underlying traits to avoid appearing prejudiced. In sum, Sinclair and Kunda reasoned that after receiving negative feedback from a female manager, participants became motivated by the resulting threat to their self-esteem to stereotype and derogate these women. However, role congruity theory suggests the possibility of another cause of this derogation, namely, that the manner in which the negative feedback was presented violated the female-gender-role expectation of kindness.

Role congruity theory suggests that people will derogate females when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the female gender role. Therefore, participants in Sinclair and Kunda's Study 2, in addition to reacting to the self-esteem threat generated by receiving negative feedback, may have been reacting to aspects of the female managers’ behavior that were
inconsistent with the female gender role. Specifically, receiving negative feedback from a
woman may violate participants’ female-gender-role-based expectation of kindness. Thus,
participants may have derogated female managers, in part, because by providing negative
feedback they violated the female-gender-role expectation of kindness. One of the limiting
features of Sinclair and Kunda’s Study 2 is that they did not vary the manner in which they
provided negative feedback to participants. Thus, one of the aims of the current research was to
provide negative feedback in various ways (bluntly or kindly), so as to investigate whether a
violation of the female gender-role of kindness functions as a potential source of derogation for
female professionals who provide negative feedback.

Stereotypes about Women

In his book on stereotyping, Schneider (2004) notes that gender stereotypes “cover a lot of
territory – appearance, interests, behaviors, traits, skills and abilities,” (p. 440). These
stereotypes can be both positive and negative in valence. In fact, some research suggests that the
female stereotype has remained largely positive while the male stereotype has become more
negative in recent years (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). However, these positive ratings of women
apply primarily to domestic contexts, such as mother and caretaker. In other areas in which
women are striving to be more accepted, such as in leadership positions, women are rated less
positively (e.g., less competent, less assertive) than men, and these negative stereotypes are
associated with lower amounts of respect for women in these contexts (Schnieder, 2004). Thus,
due to the relevance of these issues for many people, it is important to explore how people apply
different stereotypes about women in different contexts.

Many researchers agree that the characteristics associated with the male gender role and
the female gender role can be most meaningfully broken down into agentic and communal
qualities (Schnieder, 2004; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly and Mladinic present evidence that the generic role of "employee", which is largely composed of agentic attributes, is most closely associated with the male gender role, whereas the role of “mother”, which is largely composed of communal attributes is most closely associated with the female gender role. One can find evidence for the association of communal and agentic attributes to the male and female gender role, respectively, by exploring research on the specific job roles that are associated with each gender. Research suggests that people consistently associate certain job roles with one gender role over the other. Some roles commonly associated with women include: nurse, flight attendant, kindergarten teacher, and party planner. Roles commonly associated with men include: sheriff, executive, doctor, and lawyer (Kennison & Trofe, 2003). These research findings appear to be consistent with the agentic and communal breakdown between the male and female gender role proposed by Eagly and Karau, in that the job roles associated with women seem to center around communal attributes. It is important to note that the leadership roles examined by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) were agentic in nature, which may have affected their results to the extent that their participants generally believed that men were better suited for the roles than women. Thus, it is not clear to what other contexts Sinclair and Kunda's findings may or may not generalize. In the current research, I examined the role of therapist, which is different from the roles of manager or professor, in that it usually requires both agentic and communal qualities.

*Women as Leaders*

Research has shown that people often evaluate women in leadership positions differently than men. For example, in one study managers were asked to rate the promotion potential of employees. Results indicated that when they held other variables important to performance
constant (e.g., age, education, satisfaction with career support, tenure) women were perceived as having lower promotion potential than men (Landau, 1995). In another study, students rated male and female professors who were described in vignettes as using the same teaching methods and as being award-winning teachers. Results indicated that the male and female professors were perceived as being equally successful; however, the reasons given for their success varied by their gender. Male professors were viewed as being successful because they were powerful and effective, whereas female professors were viewed as being successful because they were concerned and likeable (Kaschak, 1981).

Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) conducted a meta-analysis on evaluations of male and female leaders. Results of this meta-analysis indicated that female leaders are rated less positively overall (composite of the evaluations of male and female leaders in a number of studies in which the method of evaluation varied) than male leaders, but the size of this effect was small ($d = .06$). However, effect sizes were larger ($ds$ ranged from .15 to .30) when female leaders were portrayed as using a masculine leadership style (e.g., directive, autocratic). Thus, women are devalued in leadership positions at least some of the time, and particularly when they act in a manner that is perceived to be inconsistent with the female gender role.

**Backlash Effect**

Rudman and Glick (2001) more recently investigated the devaluation of female leaders who lead in a masculine fashion. These researchers suggest that people evaluate women more negatively in leadership positions because of what they call the “backlash effect.” The backlash effect is defined as a “negative evaluation of agentic women for violating prescriptions of feminine niceness,” (p. 743). These researchers suggest that women in leadership positions are in a “catch-22,” because they must behave in an agentic fashion in order to appear qualified for a
position; however, highly agentic women are evaluated negatively socially because they are perceived to have a defect in terms of the niceness that is normally expected from women. This negative social evaluation can lead to hiring discrimination because the highly agentic (qualified) female may not be well liked. These authors established that female job applicants who demonstrated agentic characteristics associated with competence (e.g., independence and ambition) without appearing socially dominant and who, instead, demonstrated communal characteristics (e.g., niceness) were more likely to be chosen for a position. This finding suggests that women may be able to avoid this “catch-22” by displaying both competence and niceness in leadership positions. This notion is consistent with the finding by Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) that people judge women who are democratic leaders more positively than women that are autocratic leaders. This also suggests that female leaders may be able to avoid the added derogation over male leaders after providing negative feedback by taking efforts to provide negative feedback in a competent but nice fashion.

Women as Leaders vs. Women as Therapists

Sinclair and Kunda (2000) examined roles (e.g., professor, manager) that are traditionally considered leadership roles and are, therefore, roles that are more commonly associated with men than women (Eagly & Karau, 2002). One contribution of the current research is that I examined the potential motivated stereotyping of women who occupy a role which is more often associated with women than men, specifically that of a therapist. The therapeutic context is different from the leadership roles investigated by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) because individuals consider several communal attributes (e.g., kindness, helpfulness) central to what they expect from a therapist. Moreover, my own research (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006) suggests that the role of psychotherapist is more commonly associated with females than males while also being
considered a professional role in which there is an expectation of the agentic traits of expertness, intelligence, and a high degree of training.

Thus, extending the research of Sinclair and Kunda to perceptions of male and female therapists may suggest important boundary conditions regarding the original findings or suggest an additional context to which their findings may apply. My findings may also suggest areas for clarifying and refining the relevant theories (e.g., theory of motivated reasoning and social role theory). From an applied perspective, I was interested in investigating the potential for motivated stereotyping in the therapy context because of the potential implications this finding, if obtained, for understanding the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. The therapeutic relationship is a key piece of successful therapeutic change (Lambert & Barley, 2001) and thus avenues of potential damage to this relationship are of clinical interest. In addition, research suggests that receiving and accepting negative feedback is often essential to therapeutic change (Tschuschke & Dies, 1997). Thus, it is of clinical interest to understand if the process of motivated stereotyping might inhibit a client’s willingness or ability to accept negative feedback from a female therapist.

**Competence and Kindness**

Competency is a core component of the roles of professor and manager that Sinclair and Kunda (2000) examined, and these roles have been traditionally occupied by and associated with males. Competence is also a core component of the psychotherapist role, in that successful therapy depends, in part, on the clients’ perceiving their therapist as having the necessary intelligence, training, and skills for conducting therapy (and, of course, the therapist actually having these traits). This notion is reflected in the common practice among therapists of hanging their diplomas and licenses on their office walls where clients can see them. Moreover,
expertise is the characteristic most expected from therapists, regardless of their gender (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006). However, because a therapist’s primary goal is to help clients with their problems, kindness is also perceived as a centrally defining component of the psychotherapist role. Indeed, my previous research has demonstrated a higher expectation for caring from female therapists than male therapists (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006). As was noted in the backlash literature, a lack of perceived kindness can lead to negative evaluations of women, and this phenomenon may be particularly likely to occur in contexts wherein people perceive kindness to be a central component.

Ways of Providing Negative Feedback

Although research consistently demonstrates that people less readily accept negative than positive feedback (Robinson, Morran, & Stockton, 1986), some ways of providing negative feedback have been found to be more effective than others. Research on group psychotherapy suggests that negative feedback is perceived to be more credible when it is about observable behavior (e.g., you are loud) than when it includes information about the evaluator’s emotions (e.g., you make me angry; Jacob, et al., 1973). Along similar lines, Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) asked employees to fill out questionnaires about their interactions with their supervisors that involved negative feedback. Participants completed the feedback environment scale (FES) to assess the dimensions of perceived competence, feedback value, and feedback thoughtfulness. Participants indicated how motivated they were to make changes based on feedback they had received from these supervisors. Results indicated that employees are the most motivated to change behavior based on negative feedback when the provider of the feedback was perceived as credible (e.g., supervisor is familiar with the employee’s performance), when the feedback was of high quality (e.g., supervisor gives feedback that is useful), and most important to the current
research, when the feedback was delivered in a kind way (e.g., supervisor gives feedback in a considerate manner). However, this research did not investigate differences in the ratings of male and female supervisors. Based on role congruity theory, I suspect that employees might consider it particularly essential for female supervisors to deliver feedback in a kind manner (I am not suggesting, however, that employees necessarily are aware that they have different standards for evaluating feedback from male and female managers).

Importantly, the negative feedback provided in Study 2 and 3 by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) may have been perceived as rather blunt and harsh. An excerpt from the negative feedback used in Sinclair and Kunda's research provided:

I was not very impressed with this person. I think his interpersonal skills are not very good . . . I was also not impressed with his answer to the question about how to motivate employees. I know this is a tough question, but he seemed to have missed some of the most important factors. I think he would be only somewhat assertive and may not be as good as the best at motivating and leading others. There is a possibility that some employees may not look up to someone like this and would not seriously listen to what he had to say . . . I really thought this person gave mediocre answers to most of the questions. Overall, I believe this person’s interpersonal skills are, at best, average. On a scale of 0 to 100, I would give him a 60 (p. 1135).

Note that this feedback was delivered in a straightforward manner, without indications of concern for the person receiving the negative feedback. Because there were no efforts to "soften the blow," I consider this feedback to be negative and blunt. The bluntness of the negative feedback may have violated the female gender-role expectation of kindness and might have partially accounted for the derogation that female managers received above male managers. To
examine the degree to which the manner in which negative feedback is presented contributes to the derogation of female professionals, I included three feedback conditions: positive feedback, negative-but-kind feedback, and blunt, negative feedback.

Summary and Description of the Current Study

I designed the current research to further test and refine the conclusions drawn by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) in which they suggested that receivers of negative feedback rated female professionals more negatively than male professionals because these individuals activated the stereotype that women are less competent than men and applied it in order to justify their derogation. As noted, there were some limitations in Sinclair and Kunda’s research design. First, they did not directly measure stereotype activation. Second, they did not examine the implications of negative feedback violating the female gender role expectation of kindness. In other words, these authors presented negative feedback to participants in a blunt manner without efforts to soften its delivery with kindness. Thus, I attempted to conceptually replicate this research while attempting to correct some of its limitations. I measured the activation of stereotypes about women, in addition to assessing perceptions of the particular individual providing feedback. I also investigated the role that the violation of the female gender role expectation for kindness may play on evaluations received by varying the level of kindness used when negative feedback is provided. Further, I explored a role that is more often associated with females than males, psychotherapist, rather than the male-dominated roles investigated by Sinclair and Kunda.

Use of a Role-Playing Methodology

Following the methodology used by Sinclair and Kunda in the current study would have involved leading participants to believe that a therapist had evaluated some aspect of their
personality or behavior and then had given them a negative evaluation. Doing so, particularly in a context involving psychotherapy, may have been problematic on ethical grounds. Therefore, rather than deceiving participants into believing that they were receiving actual psychological feedback from a therapist, in the current study, participants were asked to imagine receiving this feedback. I expected that the use of a role-playing methodology would likely lower the impact of the feedback on participants and consequently lower our study's ecological, and potentially internal validity. However, I hoped to offset these potential limitations by immersing my participants in the study and creating a context characterized by psychological realism. This concept refers to an intense immersion into the imagined context with a change of emotions consistent with situations being described (see Hammerl, 2000). The success of this role-playing study, in terms of providing an adequate test of the hypotheses, depended upon the ability of the methodology to invoke motivated reasoning in my participants. As will be described in the Method section, along these lines, I asked participants to imagine themselves in a detailed situation and also to write about their feelings regarding the feedback they (hypothetically) received from a therapist. Other researchers have used similar techniques to immerse participants in a study and intensify participants’ emotional reactions to experimental stimuli (see Gordon & Miller, 2000; Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997). Thus, I chose a role-playing methodology because, otherwise, there would have been worrisome ethical concerns associated with providing bogus negative feedback to participants (see Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975), and I believed, based on past research using emotion-based role-playing methodologies, that this method would provide an adequate test of my hypotheses.
Hypotheses

1. Ratings of male and female therapists (e.g., skill ratings, ratings of competence, and likelihood of participants referring a friend to him or her) will be equally favorable after giving positive feedback. Ratings of female therapists will be lower than male therapists after providing negative (collapsing across blunt and kind deliveries) versus positive feedback.

2. Ratings of female (on the three dimensions noted above), but not male, therapists who provide negative feedback will vary with the level of kindness demonstrated while providing the negative feedback (e.g., blunt negative, negative-but-kind). Ratings of female therapists who provide negative feedback in a blunt-and-harsh manner will be more negative than a) ratings of female therapists who provide negative feedback in a kind manner and b) ratings of male therapists who provide negative feedback in a blunt-and-harsh manner.

3. Participants will be less satisfied with negative feedback (collapsed across kind and blunt) received from female versus male therapists.

4. Participants who receive negative feedback from a male therapist will rate themselves more negatively on relationship skills than those who received negative feedback from a female therapist.

5. Activation of the female stereotype will be stronger when female therapists provide negative versus positive feedback, and particularly so when female therapists provide negative feedback in a blunt versus a kind manner. Stereotype activation was measured by a word-completion task, in which more fragments filled in with words stereotypically associated with women indicated greater stereotype activation.
METHOD

Participants and Design

Data were collected using two formats. I collected data using paper-and-pencil surveys for 3.5 months. During this time 110 students participated. I collected the remainder of the data using an online survey tool, PsychData.com. Over the course of two additional months 75 students participated in the online version of the study.

Paper-and-pencil Data

One hundred and ten students, participating for course credit, completed the paper-and-pencil survey. Three of these participants were excluded from the analyses because they failed the manipulation check regarding sex of therapist. This left a working sample of 107 participants; 32 (30%) were male, and 75 (70%) were female (average age = 20.43, SD = 3.99).

On-line Data

Seventy-five students, participating for course credit, completed the on-line survey. One participant was excluded from analyses because he failed a manipulation check regarding sex of therapist. Five other participants were excluded from the analyses because they failed to complete important dependent measures. This left a working sample of 69 participants; 20 (29%) were male, and 48 (70%) were female. One participant did not indicate their sex (average age = 22.49, SD = 5.35).

Characteristics of the Entire Sample

Overall, 176 students (61% from the paper-and-pencil sample; 39% from the online sample), participating for course credit, were randomly assigned (with the constraint of having similar numbers within each condition) to one of six conditions within a 3 [Type of Feedback: (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind)] x 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] between-
subjects factorial design. The working sample was 30% male, 70% female (average age = 21.23, $SD = 4.66$). Participants were predominately Caucasian (76.7%). The sample was comprised of approximately 31% of first-year students, 11% of second-year students, 11% of third-year students, 34% of fourth-year students, and 13% of fifth-year-and-beyond students.

*Stimulus Sampling*

As part of the manipulation of Sex of Therapist, we included in the stimulus materials a head-shot photo of either a young woman or a young male. These photographs were obtained from an online photo database and had been previously judged to be similar in terms of overall attractiveness. For purposes of stimulus sampling (see Wells & Windschitl, 1999) we used 2 sets of photos, each set was comprised of one male and one female. For convenience, we refer to one pair of a male photo and a female photo as Photo Set A and the other pair of a male photo and a female photo as Photo Set B (See Figure 1). To examine whether Photo Set had any effect on the results, Photo Set was included as an independent variable within the statistical tests of each hypothesis.

*Paper to On-line Survey Conversion*

When converting the paper-and-pencil survey to the online survey, efforts were made to keep the materials as consistent as possible. I made only a few changes to the language of instructions in order to make them suitable to an on-line environment. All paging was consistent with the paper presentation, and all of the same stimulus materials and questions were used. The on-line software used was capable of completing the random assignment necessary for this study. To examine whether Data Collection Method had any effect on the results, Data Collection Method was included as an independent variable in the statistical tests of each hypothesis.
Recruitment of Participants

I recruited participants using the undergraduate participant pool associated with Bowling Green State University. Instructions at sign-up indicated that the study was concerned with how people give and receive feedback about their own and others’ relationship skills.

Materials

Informed Consent

Participants read a description of the purpose of the study, were informed about what their participation would involve, and provided their informed consent by indicating their age and gender. Participants read the following description of the study:

In this study you will be asked to participate in a role play. You will be asked to imagine that you have gone to a psychotherapist to receive feedback about your ability to get along with others. You will read scenarios that describe the process and that include the feedback that you might receive from a psychotherapist in this situation. You will then be asked to respond to several questions as though you have actually received this feedback. In order to help you imagine the context as though it were real you will be asked to complete some measures about yourself (see Appendix A).

Scenario Development: Role-Playing and Psychological Realism

Participants read a scenario that described a context in which they have recently gone through a romantic break-up and had decided to talk to a psychotherapist about their relationship skills. This scenario was designed to be rich in visual imagery so as to help participants become more psychologically immersed in the study (see Appendix B). Excerpts are included here:

Imagine that you recently broke up with a romantic partner and are now questioning your ability to relate well to other people. You decide that you would be interested in receiving a professional opinion about your ability to relate and make an appointment with a local psychotherapist to have an assessment completed. You have never seen a psychotherapist before so you decide to use the internet to find some information about the psychotherapists that are in the area. You find several biographies listed on the internet for local psychotherapists and the following bio catches your eye as a good match for what you are looking for.
One aspect of the role-playing methodology is the personalization of materials to increase participants’ engagement with the materials. Therefore, the word “you” was used throughout the scenarios to increase the likelihood that the feedback would feel personally relevant to the participants (see Batson et al., 1997).

Scenario Development – Manipulation of Sex of Therapist

To further increase the realism of the study and to serve as the manipulation of therapist sex I created a description of the therapist that participants were asked to imagine as pertaining to the person providing them with an evaluation of their relationship skills. This description included the following information: name of therapist (Paula Miller or Paul Miller), sex of therapist (female or male), list of specialty areas (e.g., chemical dependency, grief issues), educational history (e.g., I attended a 4-year University to receive my Bachelor’s degree. I majored in Psychology. I received this degree in 2003. I received a Master’s Degree two years later in Clinical Psychology.), and a description of the therapist’s theoretical orientation (e.g., My interventions most often are based on a short-term model and are derived from cognitive, gestalt, and interpersonal theories.). The description also included a photograph of a man or a woman (see Figure 1). As noted, I used 2 photos of males and 2 photos of females to assess and, I hoped, increase the generalizability of any obtained results beyond one particular male and female therapist. The descriptions of the therapists differed only in terms of the therapist’s sex, name, and photograph used (see Appendix B).

Before receiving their relationship skills feedback (to be described next), participants were given a description of the therapist to reinforce and extend my manipulation of the sex of therapist. The description read as follows:

Now imagine that Paula (Paul) Miller has just walked into the room after reviewing the paperwork you just completed (e.g., the personal assertiveness scale, relationship scale
questionnaire). She/he is of average height and build. She/he is dressed in a blue suit and is carrying a clipboard with your evaluation papers attached.

**Relationship Skills Evaluation Scales**

I included three psychological assessment tools, the Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ; See Appendix D), the Personal Assertiveness Scale (PAS; See Appendix E), and an adapted version (see Bushman & Baumeister, 1996) of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979; See Appendix F) to provide more opportunity for participants to immerse themselves into the context of the study. Data from these scales were not analyzed.

The first of these tools is the RSQ, which contains 30 items (e.g., “I find it difficult to depend on other people”) in which participants indicate how well each of the statements describes them on a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all like me, 5 = very like me; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). The second of these tools is an adapted version of the PAS, which asks participants to indicate (on a 4 point Likert-type scale, 1 = comfortable, 4 = very uncomfortable) how comfortable they would be engaging in each of 13 behaviors (e.g., asking for help) with 4 different types of people (i.e., family, co-worker, friends, romantic partner; Powell & George-Warren, 1994). I adapted this scale by changing the relationship contexts to ones that are appropriate for the age group of our participants and are more consistent with my research topic. Specifically, I did not include "boss" and instead included a "romantic partner."

Finally, the NPI was designed to measure narcissism as a personality trait as it varies within the general population and is not intended to diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder. The version of the NPI used in the present research contains 40 statements (e.g., I have a natural talent for influencing people) identified by Emmons (1987) to be psychometrically sound. Within this instrument, participants are asked to indicate for each of 40 items whether the statement is true or false about them. The 40-item version of the NPI created by Emmons
includes only items with factor loadings higher than .35, does not include most duplicate items from the original scale developed by Raskin and Hall, and is, therefore, assumed to be a better measure of narcissism than the original instrument. Previous research has demonstrated that the NPI has good reliability and validity (e.g., Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Terry, 1988).

Manipulation of Relationship Skills Feedback

Participants were randomly assigned to receive a) positive feedback, b) blunt, negative feedback, c) or negative-but-kind feedback in the form of a written scenario. I created scenarios for each of these conditions based on the feedback used by Sinclair and Kunda (2000), who provided feedback to participants about their interpersonal skills as they related to a working environment. This feedback was ostensibly based on the 3 scales (the RSQ, PAS, and NPI) participants had just completed, and which had hypothetically been evaluated by the therapist, and one open-ended question about a recent difficulty they had experienced in a relationship. The feedback included statements about the participants’ overall interpersonal skills, a rating of the participant compared to similar others, and statements about the participants’ specific interpersonal skills. I tailored the feedback used by Sinclair and Kunda to be applicable to a therapy context and to also convey my two versions of negative feedback. Sinclair and Kunda included a positive feedback condition and a condition similar to my blunt, negative feedback condition. I created scenarios to parallel these conditions, as well as to include a negative-but-kind feedback condition. For all three kinds of feedback, information was provided about three specific relationship skills: what the person does to help people get to know them, assertiveness, and openness with feelings. I included statements about several different aspects of relationship skills to increase the likelihood that participants would be able to personally relate to at least one aspect of the feedback.
In the positive feedback condition all of the statements were positive in nature and were not expected to create motivated reasoning in the participant. The positive feedback read as follows:

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.

Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was very impressive. I know that this can be a tough question, but your response indicated that you understand how to make it very easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a result of letting people get to know you I believe that you should easily be able to enter into very satisfying relationships.

I was also impressed by your high level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are able to get your needs met in relationships and that you do not let others take advantage of you, nor do you take advantage of others.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly impressed with was your ability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared open about your emotions and this openness will indicate to others that you are interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are well above average and that you will have better relationship success than about 90% of your peers. Do you have any questions?

For the blunt, negative feedback I included statements that were parallel in structure to those used in the positive feedback, with the exception that the valence of the feedback was negative instead of positive. The blunt, negative feedback read as follows:

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.
Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are not very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was not very impressive. I know that this may be a tough question, but your response indicated that you do not really understand how to make it easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a result of not letting people get to know you I believe that you will not be able to easily enter into satisfying relationships.

I was also not impressed by your low level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are not able to get your needs met in relationships and that you let others take advantage of you.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly not impressed with was your inability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared to be closed-off about your emotions and being closed-off will indicate to others that you are not interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are below average and that you will have worse relationship success than about 60% of your peers. Do you have any questions?

When creating the negative-but-kind feedback I included statements of hope and statements of concern from the therapist to help soften the impact of the negative feedback statements. These statements of hope and concern were the only difference between the negative-but-kind feedback and the blunt, negative feedback. Below is the negative-but-kind feedback, with the statements of hope and concern italicized.

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I want to start by telling you that the feedback that I am going to give you may be upsetting to you. I want you to know that although the feedback is not very positive that I believe that you can make several improvements to the way that you relate to others and that I would be more than willing to refer you to someone to help you make these changes if you are interested. Also, I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.

Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are not very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was concerning to me. I know that this may be a tough question, but your response indicated that you do not really understand how to make it easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a
result of not letting people get to know you I believe that you will not be able to easily enter into satisfying relationships.

I was also concerned by your low level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are not able to get your needs met in relationships and that you let others take advantage of you. However, as I said earlier I believe that this is something that you could change with work.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly concerned with was your inability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared to be closed-off about your emotions and being closed-off will indicate to others that you are not interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are below average and that you will have worse relationship success than about 60% of your peers. Once again, I know that this feedback may be difficult and I am more than willing to answer any questions that you may have.

*Further Enhancement of Experimental Realism: Sharing Feedback with a Friend and Writing about a Difficult Time in a Relationship*

To further enhance the experimental realism of the study, participants wrote a paragraph about a recent difficult time they had in a relationship. They were asked to imagine that the therapist had asked them this question in a psychological interview and that their written response was to represent what they would have said in the interview (See Appendix G). To further enhance realism, participants later wrote a paragraph about their feelings regarding the feedback they imagined receiving. This methodological technique has been shown to effectively increase psychological immersion in the study in other role-playing studies (see Gordon & Miller, 2000). For this task, participants were instructed to imagine that they had just finished talking to the therapist and that they had bumped into their best friend and that their friend had asked them how the assessment went. They were asked to write a paragraph to this friend describing what the therapist told them and how the feedback made them feel. All of these
instructions were at the top of a page with blank lines for them to write in their own words what they would say to their friend (See Appendix I).

**Main Dependent Variables**

Participants were asked to answer three questions about the therapist on a 10-point Likert-type scale with anchors appropriate to each scale. Participants indicated a) how skilled they believe the therapist was at evaluating relationship skills, b) how competent they believed the therapist to be, and c) how likely they would be to recommend a friend to this therapist (see Appendix K). These items are similar to the items used by Sinclair and Kunda (2000).

Also, in an attempt to replicate two specific findings from Sinclair and Kunda (2000) I asked participants to d) rate their own interpersonal skills compared to others their age after they received their feedback and e) to indicate how satisfied they were with the evaluation they received (see Appendix K). These items were completed on a 15-point (-7 to +7) Likert-type scale with anchors appropriate to each scale. Participants were instructed to answer these questions as if they had actually received the feedback from the therapist.

**Measuring Activation of the Female Stereotype**

Immediately after reading the introductory scenario, receiving their feedback, and completing the writing exercises, participants were asked to complete a number of word fragments. This word-fragment-completion task was designed for the purposes of the current study to measure the activation of the female stereotype. A similar technique was used by Sinclair and Kunda (1999) to document activation of stereotypes about African Americans. I based my construction of this dependent measure on their model. This task is based on the assumption that individuals that have activated a female stereotype will complete more of the
word fragments with words that are consistent with the female stereotype than individuals who have not activated the stereotype.

Participants received written instruction that this task should be completed as quickly as possible in the order in which the words were provided. I created the items for this word completion task based on a review of words that are stereotypically associated with women (Hosoda & Stone, 2000; Prentice & Carenza, 2002; Kennison & Trofe, 2003). For this task participants completed word fragments with missing letters represented with blank spaces (e.g., _ _ _ A N). Some of the word fragments could be completed to form words associated with the general concept of females (e.g., women). Others could be completed to form words associated with the stereotype that females are incompetent (e.g., dumb). All fragments could also be completed to form a word that is unrelated to the female stereotype (e.g., ocean or done). I included 34 word fragments. Twelve of the fragments could be completed to form a word that is associated with the female stereotype [e.g., _ _ _ AN (WOMAN); _ _ _ H E R (MOTHER); D _ _ _ (DUMB); N _ _ _ E (NURSE); _ I C E (NICE); N _ _ (NAG); _ ICKLE (FICKLE); WE _ _ (WEAK); _ E E K (MEEK); _ HY (SHY); _ I _ _ (TIMID); G _ _ _ (GIRL)] or other words. Twenty-two fragments could be completed only with words that are unrelated to the female stereotype as filler items [e.g., _ _ A T (BOAT)] (see Appendix J; Items that can be completed with words that are associated with females or negative stereotypes of females are identified in the appendix). Both the words that are generally associated with females and those associated with negative stereotypes of females were used to measure activation of the female stereotype.

**Manipulation Checks**

Participants completed four items to check the effectiveness of the manipulations of Sex of Therapist and Type of Feedback. For the first item participants indicated how positive or
negative the feedback they received was on a 15-point Likert-type scale (-7 = very negative; 0 = neither negative or positive; +7 = very positive). Second, participants indicated how the therapist rated their interpersonal skills compared to others on a 15-point Likert-type scale (-7 = much worse than average; 0 = average; +7 = much better than average). Third, participants indicated how kind the therapist was in providing the feedback on a 15-point Likert-type scale (-7 = very unkind; 0 = neither unkind or kind; +7 = very kind). For the final manipulation check, participants indicated the sex of the therapist who provided their feedback by circling either male or female (see Appendix L).

Additional Demographics

Participants provided some additional demographic information. Participants indicated their year in school and their ethnicity (see Appendix M).

Post-experimental Questionnaire

Participants completed a post-experimental questionnaire to assess suspicion about the purpose of the study. Participants described in their own words what they believed the purpose of study was and provided suggestions regarding how to make the study better (see Appendix N).

Debriefing Form

At the time of the study, participants were given (paper-and-pencil format) or presented with (online version) a debriefing form. This form thanked the students for their participation and provided them with contact information if they were interested in learning more about the study once data collection was complete. I chose to postpone a more complete debriefing regarding the purposes of the study because giving that information out at the time of data collection might have led to contamination of the data if students shared the information with other possible participants (see Appendix O). Further, given the limited amount of deception
used in this study, HSRB review indicated that a more complete debriefing was not necessary for all participants. Participants were encouraged to e-mail the researcher if they were interested in this more complete debriefing – no participants indicated an interest and, therefore, a more complete debriefing was never distributed.

Procedures

Participants were recruited from a Midwestern university (Bowling Green State University) using an electronic participant sign-up tool (Experimetrix). Instructions at sign-up indicated that the study was concerned with how people give and receive feedback about their own and others’ relationship skills. Data was collected in two formats. Slightly more than half of the data (61%) was collected in a paper-and-pencil format from participants in small groups, ranging in size from 2 to 15. The remaining data were collected using an online survey tool. For the paper-and-pencil data collection, efforts were made to include in each session participants who had been randomly assigned to as many of the different conditions as possible, within the constraint of number of participants present. After all participants had arrived to a scheduled session the research assistant distributed an envelope that contained all materials for the study. The research assistant reviewed the information sheet with the participants. Participants were told that there were four sections to the study, and they were instructed both verbally as well as in writing to return each part of the study to the envelope before beginning the next part of the study. Participants were asked to return the envelope to the researcher after all parts were complete. In the on-line data collection all prompts were present on the screen in a written format and they were prompted at the end of each section to hit continue when ready to move on in the study. On-line participants were not able to return to previously completed parts of the survey.
PART I. In both data-collection methods, after they reviewed the description of the study, participants were asked to indicate their informed consent by providing their age and gender. Participants then read the description of the role-play context. Next, participants read a description of the therapist who would be providing them with feedback about their relationship skills. This description was either of a male or female therapist, based on their condition assignment. This description contained the manipulation of Sex of Therapist. It included a photograph of the therapist, his or her name, and some general information about a therapist (see Appendix B). After reading this description, participants completed the Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ), the Personal Assertiveness Scale (PAS) that were described as assessment tools that would typically be used in an evaluation of relationship skills. The third measure that participants completed in this section was the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). The RSQ, PAS and NPI were included primarily for the purpose of creating experimental realism among participants and were not used in any of the primary analyses. Participants were told that it was important for them to answer the scales as honestly as possible and that there were no right or wrong answers. At the end of this section of materials, participants were asked to imagine that they were completing an interview with the psychotherapist and were asked to write a brief paragraph about a difficult time they had recently had in a relationship.

PART II. In both data collection methods, the second section of materials was introduced by instructions that included a physical description of the therapist. Next, participants read the feedback, which varied based on the condition the participant had been assigned to (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind). Participants were instructed to read the feedback slowly and carefully focusing on how the feedback made them feel (see Appendix H). After reading the feedback participants completed an exercise meant to increase realism. They were asked to
describe, in writing, their reactions to the feedback to a friend (see Appendix I). After completing this exercise, participants in the paper-and-pencil method were instructed in writing to return this portion of the materials to the envelope.

PART III. In both data collection methods, the third set of materials began with the word completion task that was designed to measure activation of the female stereotype (see Appendix J). At the beginning of this measure was a description of the task and instructions that they should complete this measure by filling in each of the fragments with a meaningful word. They were instructed to move on to the next fragment if unable to come up with a word in 15 seconds. Next, participants completed the main dependent variables measuring perceived skill of the psychotherapist, perceived competence of the psychotherapist, likelihood of referring a friend to the psychotherapist, satisfaction with the feedback received and a self-rating of interpersonal skills (see Appendix K). In the paper-and-pencil method participants were then asked to return these materials to the envelope before completing the final portion of materials.

PART IV. For both data-collection methods, the final portion of materials began with the four manipulation checks (see Appendix L). Next, participants indicated their ethnicity and year and school (see Appendix M). Finally, participants completed the post-experimental questionnaire (see Appendix N). In the paper-and-pencil method, once participants finished with all four parts of the study they were asked to place all parts in the envelope and return the envelope to the researcher. At this point the participants received the brief debriefing form (see Appendix O) and were given an opportunity to ask any questions that they might have about the study. In the online method, once participants completed the final section they were taken to a screen with the brief debriefing form and encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions.
RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

Participants indicated how positive/negative the feedback from the therapist was on a scale of -7 (Very negative) to 7 (Very positive). To examine the effectiveness of the manipulation of Type of Feedback, I conducted a one-way ANOVA with three levels (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind) on this item. Results indicated that there was a significant effect of Type of Feedback on ratings of how positive/negative the feedback was perceived to be, \( F(2, 173) = 236.89, p < .05 \). Participants who received positive feedback rated their feedback more positively \( (M = 5.71, SD = 1.88) \) than those who received either blunt negative \( (M = -3.96, SD = 3.24) \) or negative-but-kind feedback, \( (M = -3.32, SD = 2.80) \), \( t(114) = 19.77, p < .05, t(117) = 20.62, p < .05 \), respectively. There was no difference between the two forms of negative feedback, \( t(115) = -1.16, p > .05 \).

Second, participants indicated how their relationship skills were rated compared to others on a scale of -7 (Much worse than average) to 7 (Much better than average). I conducted a one-way ANOVA with three levels (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind) on this item. Results indicated that there was a significant effect of Type of Feedback on participants’ ratings of the relationship skills feedback they received, \( F(2, 173) = 305.69, p < .05 \). Participants who received positive feedback indicated that they had been rated more favorably \( (M = 5.58, SD = 2.21) \) than those who received either blunt negative \( (M = -3.86, SD = 3.02) \), \( t(114) = 19.23, p < .05 \), or negative-but-kind feedback \( (M = -4.38, SD = -4.38) \), \( t(117) = 25.37, p < .05 \). There was no difference between the two forms of negative feedback, \( t(115) = 1.10, p > .05 \). Together, these two results indicate that the manipulation of Type of feedback (positive, negative) was successful.
Third, participants indicated, on a scale of -7 (Very unkind) to 7 (Very Kind), how kind the psychotherapist was while providing the feedback. I conducted a one-way ANOVA with three levels (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind) on this item. Results indicated that there was a significant effect of Type of Feedback on participants’ ratings of the therapist’s kindness, $F(2, 173) = 110.14, p < .05$. Participants who received positive feedback rated the therapist as more kind ($M = 5.85, SD = 1.96$) than participants in the negative-but-kind ($M = 0.92, SD = 3.08$), $t(117) = 10.40, p < .05$, and the blunt, negative ($M = -2.21, SD = 3.60$), $t(114) = 15.04, p < .05$, feedback conditions. Importantly, in the negative-but-kind condition the psychotherapist was rated as more kind than the psychotherapist in the blunt, negative condition, $t(115) = -5.06, p < .05$. These results indicate that I was able to successfully alter the perception of kindness present in the two forms of negative feedback.

For the final manipulation check, participants indicated whether the psychotherapist in their scenario had been male or female. The vast majority (98%) of participants successfully completed this manipulation. Four participants failed this manipulation by indicating the incorrect sex of therapist; these participants were dropped from further analyses.

Data Collection Method and Photo Sets

To test for possible effects of Data Collection Method (Pen-and-Paper, Online) and Photo Set (A, B) I included both of these variables in the ANOVAs conducted for all 5 hypotheses. If no significant main effects or interactions were found that involved these variables I focused on the results central to each hypothesis.
Are Men and Women Rated Differently After Providing Negative Versus Positive Feedback?

In Hypothesis 1, I predicted that ratings of male and female therapists would be equally favorable after giving positive feedback, but that ratings of female therapists would be lower than male therapists after providing negative (collapsing across blunt and kind deliveries) feedback. To test this hypothesis, I first created a composite index by averaging participant responses to the three items designed to (inversely) measure derogation (e.g., how skilled was the psychotherapist, how competent was the psychotherapist, how likely would you be to refer a friend to this psychotherapist). These items were internally consistent (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) and highly correlated ($rs$ ranged from .79 to .84). Then, I conducted a 2 [Type of Feedback: (positive, negative (blunt negative and negative-but-kind collapsed))] x 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] x 2 [Data Collection Method (Pen-and-Paper, Online)] x 2 [Photo Set (A, B)] ANOVA on the composite item. Alpha was set at .05 for all analyses.

Results did not yield any main effects or interactions involving either Data Collection Method or Photo Set (all $ps > .05$). Therefore, I will focus on the primary analyses regarding the hypothesis. Results yielded a significant main effect of Type of Feedback, $F(1, 142) = 5.25$, $p < .05$. Participants who received positive feedback rated the psychotherapist more favorably ($M = 6.20$, $SD = 2.28$) than participants who received negative feedback ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 2.47$). However, results did not yield the predicted Sex of Therapist x Type of Feedback interaction, $F(1, 142) = .97$, $p > .05$. Females were not derogated ($M = 5.19$) more so than males ($M = 5.06$) after providing negative feedback, $t(114) = .27$, $p > .05$. Instead, whereas male therapists were rated similarly regardless of having provided positive ($M = 5.80$) or negative ($M = 5.06$) feedback, $t(85) = 1.27$, $p > .05$, female therapists were rated more positively after providing positive ($M = 6.59$) than negative ($M = 5.19$) feedback, $t(86) = 2.78$, $p < .05$. Female ($M = 6.59$)
and male ($M = 5.80$) therapists were rated similarly after providing positive feedback, $t(57) = 1.33, p > .05$. (See Table 1 for means and standard deviations; See Figure 2 for a depiction of the expected pattern of results and the obtained pattern of results).

As an exploratory second test of this hypothesis I collapsed across condition assignment and correlated how positive or negative the participants perceived their feedback to be (manipulation check #1) with the composite measure of therapist ratings (higher number indicate more positive ratings). For male therapists the correlation between valence of feedback and ratings of competence ($r$) was $.34 (p < .05)$. For female therapists the correlation between valence of feedback and ratings of competence was $.41 (p < .05)$. Thus, giving positive feedback was associated with receiving more positive evaluations for both male and female therapists. Further, although the correlation is stronger for females, these correlations are not significantly different from one another ($z = .60, p > .05$).

As an additional exploratory test of this hypothesis, I again collapsed across condition assignment and correlated participants’ judgments of the feedback they received regarding their relationship skills (better or worse than others; manipulation check #2) with the composite measure of therapist ratings (higher number indicate more positive ratings). For male therapists the correlation between participants’ judgments of the feedback they received and the composite measure of therapist ratings was $.16 (p > .05)$. For female therapists it was $.33 (p < .05)$. Here, receiving more positive feedback (about relationship skills, specifically) was associated with more positive evaluations of females but not males. Once again, although the correlation is stronger for females, these correlations are not significantly different from one another ($z = 1.13, p > .05$).
In sum, the experimental results suggest that female, but not male therapists, were rated more positively after they provide positive versus negative feedback. However, the prediction that females would be rated equally to males after providing positive feedback but more negatively than males after providing negative feedback was not supported. The correlational evidence provides some tentative evidence that the ratings of female therapists were more strongly related to the type of feedback they delivered than was the case for male therapists. However, the correlational results must be interpreted with caution.

A Test of Role Congruity Theory: Does Kindness Matter?

In Hypothesis 2, I predicted that ratings of female therapists who provided negative feedback in a blunt manner would be more negative than a) ratings of female therapists who provided negative-but-kind feedback and b) ratings of male therapists who provided negative feedback in a blunt manner. To examine this hypothesis, I conducted a 2 [Type of Feedback: (blunt negative and negative-but-kind)] x 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] x 2 [Data Collection Method: (Pen-and-Paper, Online)] x 2 [Photo Set: (A, B)] ANOVA on the composite index of the evaluation items.

Results yielded a significant main effect of Type of Feedback, indicating that participants who received negative-but-kind feedback rated the therapist more favorably ($M = 5.85, SD = 2.37$) than participants who received blunt, negative feedback ($M = 4.38, SD = 2.37$), $F (1, 84) = 7.34, p < .05$. [This main effect of Feedback Type was qualified by a Feedback Type x Photo Set Interaction, $F (1, 84) = 7.79, p < .05$. When participants were presented with Photo Set A there was not a significant difference between the ratings of those that received blunt, negative feedback ($M = 5.01, SD = 2.38$) and those that received negative-but-kind feedback ($M = 4.99, SD = 2.23$), $t(56) = .04, p > .05$. However, when participants were presented with Photo...
Set B the psychotherapist who provided negative feedback in a blunt manner \((M = 3.77, SD = 2.23)\) was perceived more negatively than the psychotherapist who provided negative feedback in a kind manner \((M = 6.65, SD = 2.20)\), \(t(56) = -5.09, p < .05^7\). Results did not include any main effects or interactions of Data Collection Method (all \(ps > .05\)).

More importantly, the results did not yield the predicted Sex of Therapist x Type of Feedback interaction, \(F(1, 112) = 1.43, p > .05\). However, consistent with my prediction, female therapists were rated more negatively after providing blunt \((M = 4.12)\) versus negative-but-kind feedback \((M = 6.12)\), \(t(56) = -3.38, p < .05\). Male therapists on the other hand were not rated more negatively after providing blunt \((M = 4.61)\) versus negative-but-kind feedback \((M = 5.55)\), \(t(56) = -1.43, p > .05\). Regarding the second part of Hypothesis 2, female therapists who provided blunt, negative feedback \((M = 4.12)\) were not rated more negatively than males who provided blunt, negative feedback \((M = 4.61)\), \(t(55) = -.77, p > .05\) (see Table 2 for Means and Standard Deviations; See Figure 3 for a depiction of the expected pattern of results and the obtained pattern of results).

As a second, exploratory test of this hypothesis I collapsed across condition assignment and correlated how kind the participants perceived their feedback to be (manipulation check #3) with the composite measure of therapist ratings (higher number indicates more positive ratings). For male therapists the correlation between these two variables \((r)\) was .35 \((p < .05)\). For female therapists the correlation was .52 \((p < .05)\). Thus, giving feedback in a kind manner was associated with receiving more positive evaluations for both male and female therapists. Although the correlation is stronger for females, these correlations are not significantly different from one another \((z = 1.13, p > .05)\).
Thus, in partial support of Hypothesis 2, the experimental results suggest that female, but not male therapists, were rated more negatively after providing blunt, negative feedback versus negative-but-kind feedback. However, contrary to prediction, females were not rated more negatively than males after providing blunt, negative versus negative-but-kind feedback. The correlational evidence provides some tentative evidence that the ratings of female therapists were more strongly related to the amount of kindness used while providing negative feedback than was the case for male therapists. However, the correlational results must be interpreted with caution.

**Does Satisfaction with Negative Feedback Differ as a Function of Sex of Therapist?**

In Hypothesis 3, I predicted that participants would be less satisfied with negative feedback (collapsed across kind and blunt) received from female versus male therapists. To test this hypothesis I selected only the negative feedback conditions and submitted the item measuring satisfaction with feedback to a 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] x 2 [Data Collection Method (Pen-and-Paper, Online)] x 2 [Photo Set (A, B)] ANOVA.

Results did not yield any significant main effects or interactions involving either Data Collection Method or Photo Set (all $p$s > .05). More importantly, results did not indicate a significant main effect of Sex of Therapist, $F(1, 99) = .08, p > .05$. There was no difference between satisfaction with negative feedback received from a male ($M = -1.97, SD = 3.50$) versus a female therapist ($M = -1.76, SD = 3.43$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

**Do Self-Ratings After Receiving Negative Feedback Differ as a Function of Sex of Therapist?**

In Hypothesis 4, I predicted that participants who received negative feedback from a male therapist would rate themselves more negatively on relationship skills than those who received negative feedback from a female therapist. To test this hypothesis I selected only the negative
feedback conditions, and submitted the item measuring self-ratings of interpersonal skill to a 2 [Sex of Therapist: (male, female)] x 2 [Data Collection Method (Pen-and-Paper, Online)] x 2 [Photo Set (A, B)] ANOVA.

Results did not yield any significant main effects or interactions involving either Data Collection Method or Photo Set (all ps > .05). Of particular relevance to this hypothesis, there was not a significant main effect of Sex of Therapist, $F(1, 99) = .24, p > .05$. There was no difference between participants’ ratings of their interpersonal skills after receiving negative feedback from a male ($M = 1.03, SD = 3.40$) versus a female therapist ($M = 1.52, SD = 3.42$). Thus, despite the means being in the predicted direction, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Does Receiving Negative Feedback from a Female Prompt Stereotype Activation?

In Hypothesis 5, I predicted that activation of the female stereotype would be stronger when female therapists provided negative versus positive feedback, and particularly so when female therapists provided negative feedback in a blunt versus a kind manner. Stereotype activation was measured by a word completion task, in which more fragments filled in with words stereotypically associated with women indicates more stereotype activation. To test this hypothesis, I first compiled a total score for the word-fragment-completion task by tallying all of the stereotyped responses for each participant. Composite scores for the word-fragment-completion task ranged from 0 to 5 ($M = 1.1, SD = 1.01$) stereotyped words out of a possible 12. (See Figure 4 for a histogram of the scores obtained by all participants). Next, selecting only the female-therapist conditions, I conducted a 3 [Type of Feedback: (positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind)] x 2 [Data Collection Method (Pen-and-Paper, Online)] x 2 [Photo Set (A, B)] ANOVA, on the total scores for the word-completion task.
Results yielded a significant main effect of Data Collection Method, $F(1, 67) = 14.54$, $p < .05$. Participants from the on-line data collection had higher stereotype activation, ($M = 1.47$, $SD = .88$), than participants in the Paper-and-Pencil data collection, ($M = .81$, $SD = .92$)\textsuperscript{8}. No other main effects or interactions were found for the Photo Set or Data Collection Method (all $ps > .05$). Of particular relevance to this hypothesis, there was not a significant main effect for Type of Feedback. Specifically, there was no difference between the amount of stereotype activation when feedback from a female therapist was positive ($M = 1.17$, $SD = .87$), versus when it was negative-but-kind ($M = 1.12$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(60) = .17$, $p > .05$, or versus when it was blunt and negative ($M = .93$, $SD = .87$), $t(55) = 1.04$, $p > .05$. Further, there was not a significant difference between the amount of stereotype activation when feedback was provided in a blunt, negative manner and when it was provided in a negative-but-kind manner, $t(60) = -.76$, $p > .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Exploratory Analyses: Sex of Participant

I did not make any predictions based on sex of participant given that research has not indicated that males and females differ in their reactions to receiving negative feedback (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). However, to fully explore my data I included Sex of Participant in the ANOVA for each hypothesis. No significant main effects or interactions were obtained for Sex of Participant.

Was the Role-Play Methodology Effective?

In order to examine whether participants took the role-playing instructions seriously I explored the responses that participants provided to the three open-ended questions they were asked. First, I explored the types of things participants wrote in response to the question about a difficult time they had had in a recent relationship. This item was included to help participants
become more immersed in the study. In order to elucidate the level of immersion I am including a random sampling of responses provided by participants. Below are a few examples of the responses provided by participants:

“People tend to take advantage of me. Often time I take on more than my fair share to ensure that it is done right. I tend to be a people pleaser. I tend to speak my mind and voice opinions from both sides of the fence. I’m quick to point out how the other person may feel.”

“Well there is this girl that is a good friend of mine and I thought I would ask her out to a movie but she said no and that she just wanted to be friend but then our friendship changed slightly and now she hardly talks to me. I keep trying to talk to her though.”

“I had a difficult time when my girlfriend wanted to end our relationship because we were going to different colleges. I didn’t want to, but she broke it off and I still like her.”

“I dated a boy for nearly 3.5 years throughout high school and some of college. He stayed at home and I went away to school. The distance was inevitably too much for us so we broke it off. The hardest part was I lost one of my best friends due to this situation, as we were friends before dating.”

An informal examination of the responses to the interview item suggests that participants seemed to be immersed in the context of the study and to be taking the study materials seriously.

Next, I examined the types of things participants wrote in response to the feedback received. In order to elucidate the level of immersion I am including a random sampling of responses provided by participants. Below are a few examples of the responses provided by participants after reading the feedback they received from the therapist.
Responses to Positive Feedback:

“He told me that I am great with my peers. I think I just went and wasted my time with a liar and I think he just told me what I wanted to hear instead of what was right.”

“Paula told me that I have extremely good relationship skills, that I am above normal when it comes to expressing my feelings and emotions. This makes me feel good and justified in dumping my ex-girlfriend. I know I’ll find another girl that will make me much happier.”

Responses to Blunt, Negative Feedback:

“I do not have a best friend, but I would say Paul feels I am incapable of having a normal relationship. I feel that I have come a long way given my background and it is easy to be on the other side of the fence telling someone they are wrong. I would like to see data or a study that correlates to my 60% of my peers that are more emotionally correct. Then I would say that you have to have tough skin in this world and if you walk around blubbering about feelings and such you will never succeed, you will never be #1. To be #1, I am going to make something of myself without all of the emotions because they are unnecessary for everyday life. Emotions are for special people in your inner circle, who really deserve them not co-workers and everyday life. But thank Paul for his time invested in my evaluation.”

“Paula told me that my relationship skills were not very good. To be honest, I’m not sure how much I should trust her assessment. She concluded everything from meeting me one time. If she talked to me over a longer period of time, perhaps I would trust her
assessments more. Also, I think I should get more opinions. Maybe I’ll see another therapist. Also, what do you think?”

Responses to Negative-but-kind Feedback:

“Paula told me that I basically suck, and you probably shouldn't be my friend. The feedback didn't really bother me, because I know my situation and that I am socially retarded.”

“I went for my feedback today and it didn’t make me feel better at all. That was a waste of money. I thought he was supposed to help me, not make me feel like crap. He told me that I was the main problem and that I need to be assertive and have an openness toward people. He also said that I don’t make it easier for people to get to know me, please. The feedback he gave me squashed me inwards. I know I am better than what he can evaluate. I was the jewel in this relationship and what he’s trying to do is take me back to the ground where I was, I am not changing who I am. I know I am perfect and everything women are looking for in a man. I just have to find the right woman for that.”

On this item, there was variability in how immersed participants were; however, some variability would be expected regardless of the method used. Therefore, as with the responses to the interview question these responses to the feedback received also seem to suggest that participants were immersed in the context of the study.

Finally, I examined participants’ responses to the post-experimental questionnaire on their beliefs about the purpose of the study. Below are a few examples of the responses provided by participants:
“If being provided a positive but wrong evaluation will produce positive, negative, or neutral results for the person evaluated.”

“To see how we react to relationships.”

“I believe the purpose of this study is to see how well you get along with others and how well is your social skills.”

“I think the study was to see how people perceive their relationship skills and their reactions to criticism of their relationship skills.”

These responses seem to indicate a level of understanding about the study suggesting that participants were paying attention. However, there is no evidence of demand characteristics, in that participants did not mention different predictions based on sex of therapist. Overall, I believe that my investigation of the types of responses that participants provided to the open-ended questions suggests that they were immersed in the study and that they were taking the materials seriously. This suggests that our methodology was successful in simulating the manipulations we intended to achieve.

Summary of Results

Overall, most of the hypotheses from this study were not supported by the experimental results. In regards to Hypothesis 1, female, but not male therapists, were rated more positively after they provided positive versus negative feedback. However, the prediction that females would be rated equally to males after providing positive feedback but would be rated more negatively than males after providing negative feedback was not supported. However, I did obtain some correlational evidence indicating that the ratings of female compared to male therapists are more strongly related to the type of feedback they provide. In regards to
Hypothesis 2, as predicted, female, but not male therapists, were rated more negatively after providing blunt, negative feedback than after providing negative-but-kind feedback. However, the prediction that females would be rated more negatively than males after providing blunt, negative feedback was not supported. Again, I obtained some correlational evidence that the ratings of female, rather than male, therapists were more strongly related to the amount of kindness used while providing negative feedback. In regards to Hypothesis 3, college students were not more satisfied with negative feedback received from male therapists than negative feedback received from female therapists. In regards to Hypothesis 4, college students did not differ their personal ratings of interpersonal skill based on the sex of psychotherapist providing the negative feedback. In regards to Hypothesis 5, the activation of the female stereotype did not vary based on feedback condition. Finally, an exploration of responses provided to open-ended questions suggests that the role-play methodology was successful in producing immersion into the conditions put forth by the study and that a lack of strong manipulation cannot explain the null results found in this study.
DISCUSSION

I designed the present research to examine the theory of motivated reasoning, and one of its sub-processes, motivated stereotyping. This theory has led to the prediction that women will be derogated more so than men when they provide negative feedback, because negative stereotypes about women can be activated to justify such derogation (Sinclair & Kunda, 2000). Several previous studies have supported this prediction. I was interested in extending the research previously done on motivated stereotyping to a new social context, that between psychotherapist and client. However, previous research contained some methodological limitations and alternative explanations existed for its results. Therefore, I designed this research to investigate the potential explanatory power of role congruity theory to help explain the results previously documented by Sinclair and Kunda (2000). This theory suggests that women will be derogated most strongly when they are in male-dominated professions and roles or when they behave in ways that are contrary to the female gender role (e.g., behaving unkindly; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Based on role congruity theory I considered it important to investigate the theory and process of motivated stereotyping within a role that is more commonly associated with females, specifically that of psychotherapist (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006). Previous research had examined the motivated stereotyping of women only within the traditionally male-dominated roles of professor and manager. Further, I chose the role of psychotherapist because of the potentially important implications of motivated stereotyping of women for those providing therapy services, given that providing negative feedback is often a necessary component of successful therapy (Weiner, 1998).

I extended the previous research in two additional ways. First, I directly measured activation of the female stereotype. Previous research regarding the motivated stereotyping of
females did not directly measure stereotype activation but rather inferred it from other measures used. Additionally, I varied the degree of kindness with which the negative feedback was provided by male and female therapists. I thought it possible that participants in the research conducted by Sinclair and Kunda (study 2) may have responded differently if the female managers who provided the negative feedback had not, by giving such blunt, negative feedback, violated the gender role expectation of kindness. In the current research, I included three levels of feedback (positive, blunt negative, and negative-but-kind).

A further departure from the previous research conducted by Sinclair and Kunda (2000; Study 2) was that I chose to use a role-play methodology. Sinclair and Kunda led participants to believe that a manager had actually given them positive or negative feedback. Instead of adopting a similar procedure, I chose to use a role-play methodology because of the worrisome ethical implications of providing bogus, negative, and personally relevant feedback to participants (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975). I felt that the potential negative consequences of deceiving participants about their relationship skills were too problematic. Moreover, previous research has been highly successful in using role-play methodology to produce meaningful psychological effects (see Gordon & Miller, 2000; Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997).

Based on previous research on motivated stereotyping, I predicted that female psychotherapists would be derogated more so than male psychotherapists after providing negative feedback. However, the data did not support this hypothesis. We tested the notion that females would be derogated more so than males in several ways. First, I examined ratings of the feedback providers’ skill (a composite measure of skill, competence, and likelihood of referring the therapist to others) based on type of feedback provided and found no difference based on sex therapist. In other words, female therapists were not rated more negatively than male therapists
after providing negative feedback. Importantly, however, participants did rate therapists more negatively when they had received negative versus positive feedback. This suggests that participants attended and reacted in a psychologically meaningful way to the type of feedback they had received.

Second, I investigated whether the amount of kindness used while providing negative feedback impacted participant’s reactions to the feedback provided by male and female therapists. Females, but not males, were rated more positively after providing negative-but-kind versus blunt, negative feedback. Third, I investigated participants’ satisfaction with negative feedback they received from the therapist. There was no difference in satisfaction ratings based on the sex of therapist. Fourth, I investigated participants’ self-ratings after receiving the feedback from the psychotherapist. Participants did not take negative feedback from a male more seriously than negative feedback from a female, as was predicted. Fifth, the female stereotype was not more strongly activated based on the type of feedback provided by female therapists, suggesting that participants were not activating the female stereotype to justify derogating female psychotherapists that provided negative feedback.

Although I obtained partial support for two of the hypotheses, taken together, these results seem to suggest that in the role of psychotherapist females are not systematically derogated more so than males after delivering negative feedback to clients. This conclusion may be premature, however, in that two sets of correlational data suggest that the relationship between the type of feedback provided and the competency ratings received was stronger for female, rather than male, therapists. These correlational results are consistent with my hypotheses, in that they suggest that college students may consider the type of feedback they received (i.e., positive, blunt negative, negative-but-kind) more so when rating female therapists
than when rating male therapists. These correlational data must be interpreted with caution, but they do suggest a more complex picture than is presented by the experimental data.

Why Might Female Psychotherapists Avoid Derogation?

Why might women not have been derogated after providing negative feedback in the role of psychotherapy when this kind derogation has been demonstrated against women in other professional roles? Although it is difficult to interpret null results, the possible implications of the null results found in this research are interesting and may be important. To begin, it is possible that females were not derogated while in the role of therapist, because this is a context in which females are expected to be expert and competent. In my previous research, I examined the attitudes and expectations that students hold regarding the role of psychotherapist. The results of this research indicated that students expect females to be more successful as psychotherapists than males, in general. Further, female psychotherapists were expected to be more successful in treating a majority of the different psychological issues examined. Also, students indicated a preference for a female psychotherapist, if they have a preference, over a male psychotherapist (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006). Thus, my previous research suggests that the role of psychotherapist is a role more commonly associated with females than with males, therefore a female role. Role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) suggests that females are most likely to be derogated when they behave outside of the scope of the female gender role. Thus, it is possible that we have identified a boundary condition to the theory of motivated stereotyping. It is possible that individuals are less likely to feel justified in derogating a female when she is performing a role in which women are respected, considered expert, and preferred over men.
Other Possible Explanations for Why Female Psychotherapists May Avoid Derogation

Another possible explanation for the null results is that my role-play methodology was not successful and therefore limited my ability to provide an adequate test of the hypotheses. The success of role-playing methodologies depends on the participants becoming psychologically involved with the study. Along these lines, I made several efforts to immerse my participants into the role-play context, and several results suggest that this immersion was successful. My manipulation checks indicated that the manipulation of sex of therapist was successful. Moreover, the manipulation of type (positive or negative) and degree of kindness in the feedback were successful. Perhaps more importantly, individuals who were asked to imagine that they received negative feedback were less satisfied with the feedback that they received ($M_{\text{negative}} = -1.86$ vs. $M_{\text{positive}} = 1.93$), and they reported lower self-ratings of their interpersonal skills ($M_{\text{negative}} = 1.28$ vs. $M_{\text{positive}} = 2.69$). These results indicate that participants were paying attention to the stimulus materials and that they were interpreting the feedback as though it were personally relevant. Further, an informal examination of participants’ responses to open-ended questions about a) a difficult time in a recent relationship; b) their response to the feedback that they received as though written to a best friend; c) and their ideas about the purpose of the research reveals that they were providing responses that would be consistent with involvement with the study. These responses included both detail and emotion, indicating that participants were indeed immersed in the context of the study. Therefore, it appears that the methodology I designed was successful in terms of manipulating the independent variables Sex of Therapist and Type of Feedback and in terms of creating experimental realism in participants. Thus, although the role-play methodology might have somewhat lessened the study’s ecological and internal validity the results suggest that a failure of the role-play methodology alone cannot account for the
differences in results found in our study and those found by Sinclair and Kunda (2000). In other words, the lack of results suggesting a derogation of female psychotherapists who provide negative feedback may be revealing something real and important.

A final explanation for the null results might be a lack of statistical power. Before conducting this research, I conducted a power analysis to determine an appropriate sample size. I based this analysis on the moderate effect sizes found by Sinclair and Kunda (2000). In other words, I obtained a sample large enough to document a moderate effect. However, it remains possible that female therapists who provide negative feedback are derogated relative to their male counterparts, only that the size of this effect is small. If this is the case I would have needed a larger sample size to demonstrate a smaller effect.

Clinical Implications

It is positive news that females in the role of psychotherapist, a role more often held by females, may be able to avoid the pattern of motivated stereotyping and derogation that has been demonstrated in research examining more male-dominated roles. Given that the therapeutic relationship is such a large component of the change process (Lambert & Barley, 2001) it is of clinical interest to understand if and when damage might be done to the relationship when negative feedback is provided to clients. The results that I obtained suggest that clients may not draw upon negative female stereotypes to avoid having to accept and process negative feedback that they receive from their female psychotherapists. In other words, the change process may not be negatively impacted as a function of the sex of therapist. Delivering negative feedback to clients is still difficult and may be likely to evoke a defensive reaction. However, female and male therapists may struggle with this to relatively equal degrees.
The Role of Kindness

In this research I also examined the role that kindness while providing feedback may play in terms of affecting responses to feedback. Based on role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), I hypothesized that participants would have a less negative reaction to negative feedback received from a female if that feedback was provided in a kind manner. Given the expectation that females will be kind and evidence from my previous research (Barnhart Miller & Gordon, 2006) that suggests a stronger expectation for female versus male therapists to be kind, I expected participants to react differently to feedback received from female therapists as a function of the degree of kindness it reflected. Results from the manipulation check indicated that participants recognized the level of kindness present in the blunt negative and negative-but-kind conditions.

Although it was not exactly what I predicted, females were rated more positively after they provided negative-but-kind feedback than after providing blunt, negative feedback. However, there were no differences between how males and females were rated based on the type of feedback. To be specific, women were not rated more negatively than men after providing blunt, negative feedback as was expected. Further, men were not rated differently when they provided blunt negative versus negative-but-kind feedback. Thus, these results suggest that women benefited from providing feedback in a kind manner but were not derogated for providing negative feedback in a blunt manner more so than males. Therefore, taken together with other results, it appears that for this context the overall role (e.g., psychotherapist vs. professor) rather than staying within the bounds of gender role based behaviors (e.g., behaving kindly) is most important to determining how others will react to feedback received from a female psychotherapist.
Strengths of the Current Research

There are four aspects of the current research that may make it valuable. First, this study suggests that role-playing methodologies may be suitable for testing the theory of motivated reasoning. Second, to the extent that my arguments along these lines are convincing, then I may have identified a boundary condition to the theory of motivated stereotyping of women. I investigated the role of therapist, which is a role that is not male dominated, adding to the conditions that have been examined for this theory. Further, the role of psychotherapist was valuable to investigate because of the potential clinical implications if a pattern of derogation had been discovered. It is important and welcome news for female psychotherapists if they are not uniquely derogated after giving negative feedback within this role.

Third, in this research I explored the process of motivated stereotyping by developing and utilizing a measure of female stereotype activation. Previous research used to test the theory of motivated stereotyping of females has only indirectly measured stereotype activation. Stereotype activation was not strong in this study. Further, stereotype activation did not vary based on type of feedback provided as would be predicted by motivated stereotyping. At first blush, it might appear that the measure I created to assess stereotype activation was not successful. However, a comparison with the amount of stereotype activation shown in previous research that successfully used a similar measure of stereotype activation reveals similar levels of stereotype activation. In my research, the average number of fragments completed with stereotyped words was 1.1 (out of a possible 12); whereas the average number found in previous research (Sinclair & Kunda, 1999) was 1.02 (out of a possible 13). This suggests that the female stereotype was activated in my research. However, the amount of stereotype activation did not vary with the type of feedback provided.
A final contribution of this research was the exploration of a different potential explanation for patterns of derogation that have been demonstrated by Sinclair and Kunda (2000). In this research, I, not only made hypotheses based on the theory of motivated stereotyping but also considered the importance of role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) for understanding these patterns. I investigated the importance of role congruity by studying a female gender role rather than the male dominated roles previously investigated. I also investigated the potential impact of behavior expectations such as the expectation for kindness from women. I believe that exploring the potential explanatory power of role congruity theory is an important contribution to the study of motivated stereotyping of women. This exploration may allow for a more complete understanding of patterns of derogation found within this literature because it provides others bounds for justifying derogation (e.g., role violations and behavior expectation violations). Thus, I believe that the lens that role congruity theory provides would be useful to consider in all future research in the area of motivated stereotyping of women.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are two potential limitations of the current study. The first potential limitation was the use of a role-play methodology instead of deception. Although I argue that the role-play methodology was successful in producing psychological immersion it is still possible that participants did not respond as strongly to feedback that they imagined receiving as they might have to feedback that they thought was real. Therefore, I believe that it would be useful to replicate the research conducted by Sinclair and Kunda (2000) without changing the context (e.g., professors and managers) using a role-play methodology to see if similar results are obtained. Further, a more deceptive approach, as long as a careful and thorough process debriefing is employed, using the role of psychotherapist could effectively rule out a failed
methodology as an explanation for the null results and further generate support for my interpretation that females may only experience the derogation predicted by motivated stereotyping in male dominated roles.

The second potential limitation was generalizability. We only investigated one role, that of psychotherapist. I expect that similar results may be found in other studies examining female-dominated roles, for example nursing. However, it is possible that there are characteristics of the role of psychotherapist that are unique and independent of the gender role expectations. Therefore, to further test the role of gender role expectations on motivated stereotyping more research using varying roles, both male and female dominated, would need to be conducted.

Conclusions

Past research on motivated stereotyping painted a picture in which women had to be careful when providing negative feedback in order to avoid undue criticism. Results from my research suggest that this may not be the case in the role of psychotherapist. Perhaps this reduced derogation is specific to the role of psychotherapist or perhaps my results suggest that women in a least some professional roles are no longer being unfairly scrutinized. In the realm of employment, past research demonstrated that women were evaluated less positively than men. Specifically, when managers were asked to rate the promotion potential of employees, when all other variables important to performance were held constant (e.g., age, education, satisfaction with career support, tenure) women were perceived as having lower promotion potential than men (Landau, 1995). However, more recent research is demonstrating that the employment world may be less biased based on sex of employee. When examining a pattern of hiring processes, it has been demonstrated that in terms of sex of applicant, the process is based entirely on merit and that the small amounts of sex differences that are found can be accounted for by age
and education level (Peterson, Saporta, & Seidel, 2000). Thus, it appears that there has been a shift in the role that sex of applicant plays in the employment process. This research combined with my results provides some hopeful news for women in general.
REFERENCES


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Prentice, D. A. & Carranza, E. (2002). What women and men should be, shouldn’t be, are allowed to be, and don’t have to be: The contents of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26*, 269-281.


FOOTNOTES

1 There is a significant body of literature on the function of attitudes. Katz (1960) proposes that attitudes can serve four functions for an individual: adjustment, ego defense, value expression, and knowledge. The function of ego defense is most similar to what is discussed in motivated reasoning and is a type of attitude that exists to protect a person from truths about themselves. Katz suggests that this type of attitude will be activated when the person’s self-image is threatened in some way (most similar to motivated stereotyping), when some sort of appeal is made for hatred towards a group, when the person experiences large amounts of frustration, or when the person is exposed to an authoritarian suggestion. When this type of attitude is aroused people are expected to react in a way to protect their image of themselves (e.g., avoidance of the unpleasant stimulus or hostility toward the unpleasant stimulus). A more complete review of this literature is not included because it is beyond the scope of the present research project.

2 The overall pattern of results of these three studies regarding female professionals has also been found for black professionals. Research has found that when black professionals, male or female, provide negative feedback they are also disparaged more than white professionals. Sinclair and Kunda suggest that this is due to activation of a stereotype that black individuals are incompetent (1999).

3 Other research conducted by Sinclair and Kunda (1999) on people’s reactions to receiving negative feedback from a black professional did include a direct measure of general stereotypes. This research measured general stereotype activation with success. They measured stereotype activation by using a word-fragment-completion task in which participants are asked
Earlier in the history of social psychology there was skepticism regarding the use of role-playing methodologies (for a review, see Miller, 1972). However, research has empirically demonstrated that specific forms of role-playing are successful. Horowitz and Rothschild (1970) tested the Asch paradigm of conformity using a form of role-playing they termed forewarned role-playing, in which participants were asked "pretend as though" a situation were real, without all of the explanation of deceptions that might have been used. The results of this study demonstrated that the forewarned participants conformed to the same degree as deceived participants but did not report the same level of suspiciousness of research after the study was complete as participants that were deceived. Another example of the successful use of role-play methodologies is provided by Mann and Janis (1968), in which they asked smokers to take on the role of a lung-cancer victim or listen to someone else take on the role of a lung cancer victim. Results of this study, which involved collecting the dependent measures after an 18-month interval, indicated that smokers who had participated in the emotional role-play of a lung-cancer victim smoked significantly fewer cigarettes than smokers who had simply listened to someone else take on this role. This research suggests that participants are capable of seriously taking on a role and experiencing emotional responses that would be expected in the role-played context without the necessity of elaborate deception.

I conducted a power analysis using GPower software to determine an appropriate sample size to obtain reasonable power in my study. For this power analysis I set my desired power at .80, a commonly agreed upon minimal level of reasonable power, and I estimated a
moderate effect size based on the results found by Sinclair and Kunda (2000). This power analysis indicated that a sample size of approximately 180 would be appropriate.

The data from the NPI was analyzed to explore a possible relationship between narcissism and reactions to negative feedback. We explored whether those high in narcissism would react more strongly to negative feedback than those lower in narcissism. The results suggested that our participants overall were in the moderately narcissistic range, ($M = 61.21, SD = 6.40$ out of a range of 40-80). When I conducted correlations including narcissism and our primary dependent variables there were no significant relationships.

Why might Photo Set have mattered in this condition? It is unclear why this interaction including Photo Set was obtained. These photos have previously been rated to be equally attractive, however a measure of how kind each person in the photos appeared was not conducted. Therefore, it is possible that there are differences in how kind/unkind the participants appeared leading to an exaggerated effect of the kindness manipulation for one Photo Set and not for the other.

Why might Stereotype Activation varied with Data Collection Method? It is unclear why this result was found given that the exact same instructions and word fragments were used for the Online and Pen-and-Paper formats.
Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Sex of Therapist x Type of Feedback Interaction for the Derogation Composite Item - Hypothesis 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of therapist</th>
<th>Type of feedback</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5.80 (2.69)</td>
<td>5.06 (2.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6.59 (1.77)</td>
<td>5.19 (2.44)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for the Sex of Therapist x Type of Feedback Interaction for the Derogation Composite Item – Hypothesis 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of therapist</th>
<th>Type of feedback</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blunt neg.</td>
<td>4.61 (2.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neg. but kind</td>
<td>5.55 (2.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blunt neg.</td>
<td>4.12 (2.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neg. but kind</td>
<td>6.12 (2.30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Psychotherapist Bio Photos

Photo Set A

Photo Set B
Figure 2. Predicted and Obtained Pattern of Results for Hypothesis 1

Note. * denotes significant difference between means.
Figure 3. Predicted and Obtained Pattern of Results for Hypothesis 2

Predicted

Obtained

Note. * denotes significant difference between means.
Figure 4. Histogram of Word Completion Task Scores
APPENDIX A – CONSENT DOCUMENTS

Informed Consent, Paper-and-Pencil

YOUR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: __________

Feedback About Your Ability to Get Along With Others  Spring 2008

In this study you will be asked to participate in a role play. You will be asked to imagine that you have gone to a psychotherapist to receive feedback about your ability to get along with others. You will read scenarios that describe the process and that include the feedback that you might receive from a psychotherapist in this situation. You will then be asked to respond to several questions as though you have actually received this feedback. In order to help you imagine the context as though it were real you will be asked to complete some measures about yourself.

Before the study begins, there are several additional things for you to note:

1. You have been assigned an identification number. This number appears at the top right of this page. All of your responses will be identified with this number only. This ensures that your responses will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Further, your name will only be used to provide research credit and will not be associated with any of the study materials.

2. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

3. There are no right or wrong answers in this study. We are interested solely in your personal opinions.

4. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study.

5. Your participation in this study is expected to take approximately 30 minutes and you will be awarded 0.5 research credits. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If at any time during the study you would like to discontinue your participation or withdraw from the study for any reason please inform the experimenter.

6. More information about the purpose of the study will be available once all data has been collected. If you are interested in obtaining this information or if you are interested in the results of this study please send your name and e-mail to amym@bignet.bgsu.edu.

7. We hope that by participating in this research you are able to gain an increased understanding of how research is conducted and become more aware of your beliefs about therapy and therapists.

8. If you have any questions concerning this research you should contact Dr. Anne Gordon at 419-372-8161 or Amy Barnhart Miller at 419-704-8390. Additionally, you may contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 with questions or concerns about rights as a research participant.

• If what is going to be asked of you is clear and you agree to voluntarily participate in this study please indicate your informed consent on the next page.

• If you wish to decline from participating in this study please let the experimenter know now.
Feedback About Your Ability to Get Along With Others

In this study you will be asked to participate in a role play. You will be asked to imagine that you have gone to a psychotherapist to receive feedback about your ability to get along with others. You will read scenarios that describe the process and that include the feedback that you might receive from a psychotherapist in this situation. You will then be asked to respond to several questions as though you have actually received this feedback. In order to help you imagine the context as though it were real you will be asked to complete some measures about yourself.

Before the study begins, there are several additional things for you to note:

1. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. At the end of the survey you will be asked to provide your name to the researcher so that you can be given credit. Your name will only be used to provide research credit and will not be associated with any of the study materials.

2. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

3. There are no right or wrong answers in this study. We are interested solely in your personal opinions.

4. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study.

5. Your participation in this study is expected to take approximately 30 minutes and you will be awarded 0.5 research credits. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If at any time during the study you would like to discontinue your participation or withdraw from the study for any reason you may simply close out this survey. Please be sure to clear page history and browser cache, especially if you are using a public computer.

6. More information about the purpose of the study will be available once all data has been collected. If you are interested in obtaining this information or if you are interested in the results of this study please send your name and e-mail to amynn@bgnet.bgsu.edu.

7. We hope that by participating in this research you are able to gain an increased understanding of how research is conducted and become more aware of your beliefs about therapy and therapists.

8. If you have any questions concerning this research you should contact Dr. Anne Gordon at 419-372-8161 or Amy Barnhart Miller at 419-704-8390. Additionally, you may contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 with questions or concerns about rights as a research participant.

9. Some employers use software that tracks web sites visited and keystrokes made, so you may wish to complete the survey on a home or public computer rather than a work computer.

- If what is going to be asked of you is clear and you agree to voluntarily participate in this study please indicate your informed consent on the next page.

- If you wish to decline from participating in this study please exit this survey now.
INFORMED CONSENT SHEET

By completing the following demographic information you are indicating that you have received enough information about this study to give your informed consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

1. Sex (circle one): Male Female

2. Age (in years): ________________
APPENDIX B – MANIPULATION OF SEX OF THERAPIST

Instructions:
Please read the following information and while doing so imagine these events as if they were actually happening to you. Take your time reading the provided materials. Read all of the materials slowly and carefully.

Imagine that you recently broke up with a romantic partner and are now questioning your ability to relate well to other people. You decide that you would be interested in receiving a professional opinion about your ability to relate and make an appointment with a local psychotherapist to have an assessment completed. You have never seen a psychotherapist before so you decide to use the internet to find some information about the psychotherapists that are in the area. You find several bio’s listed on the internet for local psychotherapists and the following bio catches your eye as a good match for what you are looking for.

Paula (Paul) Miller

Sex: Female (Male)

Education:
I attended a 4-year University to receive my Bachelor’s degree. I majored in Psychology. I received this degree in 2003.
I received a Master’s Degree two years later in Clinical Psychology.

Theoretical Orientation:
My interventions most often are based on a short-term model and derived from cognitive, gestalt, and interpersonal theories. I also practice from a humanistic philosophy of treatment. My work with clients includes both one-on-one therapy and assessments. Most clients work with me for an average of 4, 50 minute sessions.

Specialty Areas:
Chemical Dependency, Anxiety and Panic, Grief and Loss, and Relationship Concerns.

After reading this bio you decide that this psychotherapist may be exactly who you need to talk to. You decide to make an appointment and are lucky enough that Paula (Paul) has an opening the next morning.
APPENDIX C – ROLE-PLAY INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions:

Now imagine that before you meet with Paula (Paul) Miller you have been asked to complete some measures concerning your ability to get along with other people (relationship skills). Imagine that Paula (Paul) will use the results from these measures to complete the evaluation of your relationship skills. A few of the scales are on the next few pages and completing them should help you have a better understanding of what the process would actually entail. Please read each item carefully. Please take your time completing these scales. There are no right or wrong answers and it is important that you respond seriously and answer to the best of your ability.
Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ)

Directions: Please indicate how well each of the following statements describes you.

1 = not at all like me

2 = rarely like me

3 = somewhat like me

4 = often like me

5 = very like me

____ 1. I find it difficult to depend on other people.

____ 2. It is very important to me to feel independent.

____ 3. I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.

____ 4. I want to merge completely with another person.

____ 5. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

____ 6. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.

____ 7. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.

____ 8. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others.

____ 9. I worry about being alone.

____ 10. I am comfortable depending on other people.

____ 11. I often worry that romantic partners don’t really love me.

____ 12. I find it difficult to trust others completely.

____ 13. I worry about others getting too close to me.

15. I am comfortable having other people depend on me.
16. I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
17. People are never there when you need them.
18. My desire to merge completely sometimes scares people away.
19. It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.
20. I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.
21. I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.
22. I prefer not to have other people depend on me.
23. I worry about being abandoned.
24. I am uncomfortable being close to others.
25. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.
26. I prefer not to depend on others.
27. I know that others will be there when I need them.
28. I worry about having others not accept me.
29. Romantic partners often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable being.
30. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.
APPENDIX E- PERSONAL ASSERTIVENESS SCALE

Instructions: Please take your time going through each of the following situations. Rate how comfortable you are in each instance. Some of the relationships may not apply to you. For example, if you do not have a job you would leave the line next to co-worker blank for each item. For those relationships that do apply to please provide a rating of comfort using this scale:

1. Comfortable
2. Mildly uncomfortable
3. Moderately uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable

1. Asking for help:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

2. Saying no:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

3. Expressing a difference of opinion:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

4. Responding to criticism:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

5. Expressing Negative Feelings:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

6. Expressing Positive Feelings:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

7. Receiving Negative Feedback:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

8. Receiving Positive Feedback:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

9. Making a request:
   Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

10. Asking questions:
    Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______

11. Asking for favors:
    Romantic Partner: _______ Co-worker: _______ Family: _______ Friends: _______
APPENDIX F – NARCISSITIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Instructions:
The following items will provide an understanding of how you view yourself. Read each pair of statements and then indicate if the statement is descriptive of you or not. Circle **True** if you think the statement is representative of yourself. Please circle **False** if you do not think that the statement represents you. Please do not skip any items.

1. I have a natural talent for influencing people. **True** **False**
2. Modesty doesn’t become me. **True** **False**
3. I would do almost anything on a dare. **True** **False**
4. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed. **True** **False**
5. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me. **True** **False**
6. I can usually talk my way out of anything. **True** **False**
7. I prefer to blend in with the crowd. **True** **False**
8. I will be a success. **True** **False**
9. I think I am a special person. **True** **False**
10. I am not sure if I would make a good leader. **True** **False**
11. I am assertive. **True** **False**
12. I like having authority over people. **True** **False**
13. I find it easy to manipulate people. **True** **False**
14. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me. **True** **False**
15. I don’t particularly like to show off my body. **True** **False**
16. I can read people like a book. **True** **False**
17. I like to take responsibility for making decisions. **True** **False**
18. I just want to be reasonably happy. **True** **False**
19. My body is nothing special. **True** **False**
20. I try not to be a show off. **True** **False**
21. I always know what I am doing. True  False
22. I sometimes depend on people to get things done. True  False
23. Everybody likes to hear my stories. True  False
24. I expect a great deal from other people. True  False
25. I will never be satisfied until I get what I deserve. True  False
26. Compliments embarrass me. True  False
27. I have a strong will to power. True  False
28. I don’t very much care about new fads and fashions. True  False
29. I like to look at myself in the mirror. True  False
30. I really like to be the center of attention. True  False
31. I can live my life in any way I want to. True  False
32. Being an authority doesn’t mean that much to me. True  False
33. I would prefer to be a leader. True  False
34. I am going to be a great person. True  False
35. People sometimes believe what I tell them. True  False
36. I am a born leader. True  False
37. I wish somebody would someday write my biography. True  False
38. I don’t mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public. True  False
39. I am more capable than other people. True  False
40. I am much like everybody else. True  False
APPENDIX G – A DIFFICULT TIME IN A RECENT RELATIONSHIP

Instructions:
Now imagine that Paula (Paul) Miller has just walked into the room after reviewing the paperwork you just completed (e.g., the personal assertiveness scale, relationship scale questionnaire). She/he is of average height and build. She/he is dressed in a blue suit and is carrying a clip-board with your evaluation papers attached. He/she introduces himself/herself and explains that the final step in the assessment is a brief interview about your relationship history (family, friendships and romantic). She/he is particularly interested in any difficulties you have experienced in your relationships. Please imagine that you are completing this interview with Paula (Paul) and write what you might say on the following lines. If you run out of space you may write on the back of this page.

“Please tell me about a difficult time that you have had in a recent relationship”:

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***When you are finished please return this part of the study to the provided envelope and begin the second part of the study.***
APPENDIX H – FEEDBACK SCENARIOS

[Positive Feedback]

Now imagine that you have returned to meet with Paula (Paul) a day later to receive your feedback from your assessment. Paula (Paul) sits with you in the same room that you completed your interview in the day before and provides you with the following feedback. Please read this feedback slowly and carefully paying particular attention to how the feedback makes you feel.

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.

Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was very impressive. I know that this can be a tough question, but your response indicated that you understand how to make it very easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a result of letting people get to know you I believe that you should easily be able to enter into very satisfying relationships.

I was also impressed by your high level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are able to get your needs met in relationships and that you do not let others take advantage of you, nor do you take advantage of others.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly impressed with was your ability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared open about your emotions and this openness will indicate to others that you are interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are well above average and that you will have better relationship success than about 90% of your peers. Do you have any questions?
Now imagine that you have returned to meet with Paula (Paul) a day later to receive your feedback from your assessment. Paula (Paul) sits with you in the same room that you completed your interview in the day before and provides you with the following feedback. Please read this feedback slowly and carefully paying particular attention to how the feedback makes you feel.

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.

Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are not very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was not very impressive. I know that this may be a tough question, but your response indicated that you do not really understand how to make it easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a result of not letting people get to know you I believe that you will not be able to easily enter into satisfying relationships.

I was also not impressed by your low level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are not able to get your needs met in relationships and that you let others take advantage of you.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly not impressed with was your inability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared to be closed-off about your emotions and being closed-off will indicate to others that you are not interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are below average and that you will have worse relationship success than about 60% of your peers. Do you have any questions?
Now imagine that you have returned to meet with Paula (Paul) a day later to receive your feedback from your assessment. Paula (Paul) sits with you in the same room that you completed your interview in the day before and provides you with the following feedback. Please read this feedback slowly and carefully paying particular attention to how the feedback makes you feel.

Hi. I’m Paula (Paul) Miller. I just completed reviewing your evaluation materials and I am ready to provide you with some feedback based on the way that you answered the questions. I want to start by telling you that the feedback that I am going to give you may be upsetting to you. I want you to know that although the feedback is not very positive that I believe that you can make several improvements to the way that you relate to others and that I would be more than willing to refer you to someone to help you make these changes if you are interested. Also, I really appreciate you being willing to complete this evaluation with me. Are you ready to receive my feedback? Please stop me at any time to ask questions if you have them.

Overall, based on this evaluation, I believe that your relationship skills are not very good. Specifically, your response to a question on how you would help a person get to know you was concerning to me. I know that this may be a tough question, but your response indicated that you do not really understand how to make it easy for people to get to know you in order to become your friend or to become romantically involved with you. As a result of not letting people get to know you I believe that you will not be able to easily enter into satisfying relationships.

I was also concerned by your low level of assertiveness. Your responses to questions indicate that you are not able to get your needs met in relationships and that you let others take advantage of you. However, as I said earlier I believe that this is something that you could change with work.

The part of your evaluation that I was particularly concerned with was your inability to express your feelings. Throughout the assessment you appeared to be closed-off about your emotions and being closed-off will indicate to others that you are not interested in developing a deep, lasting relationship.

Overall, I believe that your relationships skills are below average and that you will have worse relationship success than about 60% of your peers. Once again, I know that this feedback may be difficult and I am more than willing to answer any questions that you may have.
APPENDIX I – REACTIONS ABOUT FEEDBACK SHARED WITH FRIEND

Instructions:
Now imagine that you have just left from receiving your feedback and that you run into your best friend. Your friend knows that you went to meet with a psychotherapist today and asks you how it went. Please write a paragraph as if you were telling your friend how you feel about the feedback you just received from Paula (Paul) Miller. You might include these things:
1). What Paula (Paul) told you.
2). How the feedback made you feel.

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***When you are finished please return this part of the study to the provided envelope and begin the third part of the study.***
APPENDIX J – WORD-FRAGMENT COMPLETION TASK

Instructions:
It is important that you complete this task in entirety before moving on to the next set of materials. Please complete each word fragment by filling in the dashes with letters to make a meaningful word. For example the fragment _ALL can be completed as ball, call, hall, fall, mall, tall, wall. Please work as quickly as possible. Complete the fragment with the first word that pops into your head. You should not spend more than 15 seconds on any one fragment. If you can not come up with a word after 15 seconds go on to the next fragment. As well, please do each fragment in the order presented.

1. ___ ___ ___ A N (woman)
2. ___ ___ A T
3. ___ ___ ___ K S
4. ___ ___ ___ H E R (mother)
5. ___ ___ T
6. B ___ ___ T
7. D ___ ___ ___ (dumb)
8. C ___ ___ C ___ ___ ___
9. ___ I N ___
10. N ___ ___ ___ E (nurse)
11. S L E ___ ___
12. L O ___ ___ ___
13. ___ I C E (nice)
14. ___ ___ T
15. R E ___ ___
16. N ___ ___ (nag)
17. ___ ___ T
18. ___ ___ L L
19. ___ I C K L E (fickle)
20. ___ ___ P E
21. D U ___ ___
22. W E ___ ___ (weak)
23. ___ I T ___ E ___
24. B L O ___ ___
25. ___ E E K (meek)
26. B E ___ ___
27. W A ___ ___
28. ___ H Y (shy)
29. ___ ___ N D
30. ___ H O ___
31. ___ I ___ I ___ (timid)
32. Q U I ___ ___
33. C O ___ ___
34. G ___ ___ ___ (girl)
APPENDIX K – MAIN DEPENDENT MEASURES

Instructions:
Please continue to imagine that you have just received the feedback that you read and complete the following items about the psychotherapist that provided the feedback. We are interested in understanding how effective different ways of providing feedback can be and are interested in your assessment of the way that the feedback was delivered to you. Please circle the most appropriate response.

1. Overall, how skilled do you believe the psychotherapist is at evaluating relationship skills?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Skilled
Very Skilled

2. How competent is this psychotherapist?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Competent
Very Competent

3. How likely would you be to refer a friend to this psychotherapist if they were interested in receiving an assessment of their relationship skills?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Likely
Very Likely

4. How would you rate your own relationship skills compared to other people your age?

-7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Much worse than average Average Much better than average

5. How satisfied were you with the evaluation that you received?

-7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very Unsatisfied Neither Unsatfied or Satisfied Very Satisfied

***When you are finished please return this part of the study to the provided envelope and begin the fourth (final) part of the study.***
APPENDIX L – MANIPULATION CHECKS

Part 4

Instructions:
Now, please answer the following questions about the evaluation you read and the therapist that completed the evaluation by circling the appropriate response.

1. How positive/negative was the feedback that you were provided?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-7</th>
<th>-6</th>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Very Negative or Positive</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

2. How did the psychotherapist rate your relationship skills compared to others?

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<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much worse than average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Much better than average</td>
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3. How kind was the psychotherapist while providing the feedback?

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<tr>
<th>-7</th>
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<th>-5</th>
<th>-4</th>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unkind</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Very Unkind or kind</td>
<td>Very Kind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

4. What was the sex of the psychotherapist that provided the evaluation in this study?

A. Female

B. Male
APPENDIX M – ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Additional Demographic Information

1. **Year in School** (please circle):
   - First Year
   - Second Year
   - Third Year
   - Fourth Year
   - Fifth Year and Beyond

2. **Ethnicity** (circle all that apply):
   - Caucasian/White
   - Asian
   - African American
   - Native American
   - Hispanic
   - Pacific Islander
   - Other: _______________________


POST-EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

On the following lines please describe in your own words what you believe to have been the purpose(s) of this study.

__________________________________________________________________
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Please describe any additional comments regarding anything that was asked of you during your participation in this study.

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APPENDIX O – DEBRIEFING FORM

Feedback About Your Ability to Get Along With Others

Thank you very much for your participation in this study!

- If you are interested in learning the results of the study when they are available or have any questions about this research, please contact:

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  Phone: 419-372-8161
  Email: akg@bgsu.edu

  Amy Barnhart Miller
  Phone: 419-704-8390
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