

An Experimental Study of the Effects of Partners' Offers of Amends and Expressions of
Responsiveness on Forgiveness for Real-life Transgressions in Romantic Relationships

by

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Abstract

Research has shown that forgiveness promotes individual psychological well-being as well as positive relationship functioning. Moreover, couples themselves report that forgiving is one of the most important reasons that their relationships stand the test of time (Fenell, 1993). However, the partner behaviours that facilitate, or even thwart, forgiveness in romantic relationships have been the subject of limited empirical research. In the current study, I investigated the effects of two sets of partner behaviour—offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness (i.e. understanding, validation, care)—on forgiveness for real-life hurtful events in romantic relationships. Sixty-four couples participated in a lab-based, experimental study in which I manipulated whether the partner who disclosed feelings about an unresolved, hurtful event (“victim”) received a videotaped response from his/her partner in which this partner (“offender”) expressed: 1) responsiveness only, 2) amends only, 3) both responsiveness *and* amends, or 4) neither responsiveness nor amends (control group). Trained coders provided micro-ratings of offenders’ specific responsive (e.g., perspective-taking) and amends (e.g., apology) behaviour as well as macro-ratings of more global displays of these behaviours (e.g., overall understanding, overall remorse). Victims also completed measures of relationship satisfaction, event severity, perceptions of their partners’ amends, perceptions of their partners’ responsiveness, and forgiveness. The findings suggest that event severity moderates the effectiveness of the general act of offering amends and/or responsiveness in promoting forgiveness. When event severity was high, the experimental manipulation of the presence vs. absence of amends and of responsiveness did not affect forgiveness. However, it did affect forgiveness for less severe events. Specifically, expressions of amends, responsiveness and their combination yielded similarly more forgiveness than no response at all. These effects were

mediated by the victim's perceptions of the offender's responsiveness to his/her experience of the hurtful event. Further, results indicated that the victims' perceptions of the offenders' responsiveness could be promoted, or thwarted, by the content of the offenders' amends. Micro-ratings of offenders' amends behaviour demonstrated that when event severity is low, more elaborate offers of amends, in particular remorse, increase the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness, which in turn, facilitate forgiveness. To the contrary, when event severity is high, offering more elaborate offers of amends has no effect at all in facilitating victims' perceptions of responsiveness, and expressing more remorse in particular, may backfire. Finally, the associations between coders' ratings of the offenders' behaviour with the victims' perceptions suggested that the victims' perceptions, especially of responsive behaviour, are perhaps largely self-construed.

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An Experimental Study of the Effects of Partners' Offers of Amends and Expressions of Responsiveness on Forgiveness for Real-life Transgressions in Romantic Relationships

Hurtful events and conflict situations are inevitable in romantic couples. However, it is the way in which these experiences are negotiated and resolved which ultimately impacts the relationship's well-being (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; see Holmes & Murray, 1996, for a review). When conflicts are negotiated poorly and hurt feelings linger, it becomes more difficult for partners to maintain benevolent attitudes and feelings of goodwill towards each other, to trust in the relationship's stability, and to access the motivation to find constructive solutions when future obstacles arise. In contrast, well-negotiated conflicts and resolution of hurt feelings can transform hurtful events into relationship-revitalizing experiences (see Holmes & Murray, 1996, for a review). Indeed, forgiving one's partner is one way in which partners can mend and nurture their relationship in the aftermath of conflict. Forgiveness after a hurtful relationship event is associated with restored levels of pro-relationship behaviours (e.g., accommodation, willingness to sacrifice, cooperation; Karremans & Van Lange, 2004), and restored levels of commitment and closeness (Tsang, McCullough, & Fincham, 2006). Greater levels of forgiveness towards one's partner are also associated with greater psychological well-being post-transgression (Bono, McCullough, & Root, 2008; Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, & Kluwer, 2003). Because hurtful events and conflict can either "make" the relationship or "break" it, exploring the factors that make forgiveness possible is important.

What is forgiveness?

When the victim¹ forgives the offending partner, he or she recognizes and processes the

¹ In romantic relationships, partners may occupy both the "victim" and "offender" roles when a hurtful event occurs. However, for sake of simplicity, I use the terms "victim" and "offender" to refer to one partner or the other.

negative feelings elicited by the hurtful event and gradually proceeds to “let go” of the negative feelings that may have once dominated interactions with his or her partner (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005). Further, the victim’s negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviours towards the offender become more positive and pro-social (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000). In the literature, forgiveness has been discussed and operationalized not only as a decrease in the victim’s negative feelings (e.g., Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Rye & Pargament, 2002) and motivations to avoid the offender and to seek retribution or revenge (e.g., Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004; McCullough et al., 1998), but also by increases in the victim’s benevolence towards the offender (e.g., Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Fincham et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 1998; Rye & Pargament, 2002) and increases in motivation to engage in constructive or conciliatory behaviour (e.g., Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Fincham et al., 2004).

A significant amount of research has investigated the correlates of the victim’s forgiveness, including cognitive (e.g., attributions of responsibility and intent), affective (e.g., empathy, mood), and dispositional (e.g., agreeableness, narcissism) factors, features of the transgression (e.g., event severity) and relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, commitment) (see Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010, for a review). However, there is relatively little research that has examined the interpersonal process by which forgiveness transpires within couples. Indeed, while many researchers discuss forgiveness as a dynamic process—involving interpersonal exchanges between partners around the transgression—most research does not assess partner behaviours that can promote or thwart forgiveness after a specific relational transgression (Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Rusbult, Hannon, Stocker, & Finkel, 2005). From the existing literature, it appears that offering amends and expressing responsiveness (i.e. understanding, validation, and care) are behaviours that may be of importance to the forgiveness process.

Offers of Amends

Offers of amends include expressions of remorse or regret (e.g., “I’m so sorry,” “I shouldn’t have said that”), acceptance of responsibility (e.g., “It’s my fault,” “What I did was wrong”), offers of compensation (e.g., “I’m going to make this up to you”) and forbearance (e.g., “It won’t happen again,” “In the future, I’ll try to...”). Broadly, they serve to mend relational bonds severed by conflict (Blatz, Shumann, & Ross, 2009; Eaton, Struthers & Santelli, 2006; Lazare, 2004; Rusbult et al., 2005; Scher & Darley, 1997).

In non-romantic relationships, offers of amends have been shown to lessen the victim’s negative feelings (e.g., Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Förster, & Montada, 2004) as well as vengeful behaviour towards the offender (Ohbuchi et al., 1989).

Within romantic relationships, the more people perceive their partner to make amends, the more forgiving they are of their partners (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a; Bono et al., 2008; Hannon, Rusbult, Finkel, Kamashiro, 2010; Kelley, 1998; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997).

Offers of amends have been shown to exert salutatory effects on forgiveness in both romantic and non-romantic relationships, but how and why do they exert these effects? Research suggests that offers of amends facilitate forgiveness by eliciting emotional empathy for the offender (i.e. feelings of compassion, tenderness, sympathy) which prompts the victim to care for the offender’s suffering and needs, thereby promoting forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough et al., 1997). Moreover, offers of amends are thought to promote forgiveness by facilitating a more positive impression of the offender’s character (e.g. Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003; Schmitt et al., 2004) and more benign attributions regarding the offender’s blameworthiness and intent to harm (e.g., Ohbuchi et al., 1989, Weiner, Graham,

Peter, & Zmuidance, 1991). In summary, some of the most well-known theories that explain the amends-forgiveness link focus on how such offers elicit positive changes in the victim's feelings towards the offender, the extent to which they are emotionally attuned to the offender, and their evaluation of the offender overall. However, offers of amends likely convey information about how the *offender* feels about the *victim*, the extent to which he or she is emotionally attuned to the victim, and the offender's evaluation of the victim's personal experience of the hurtful event. The victim's forgiveness may be importantly affected by this information as well.

Some research has investigated the relation between offers of amends and the victim's perceptions of how the offender has perceived and emotionally reacted to the victim's experience of the hurtful event. For example, some research has shown that the more victims perceive their partners' amends to be sincere and heartfelt, the more forgiving they are of their partners (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a). In contrast, offers of amends that are perceived by the victim to be disingenuous or manipulative can elicit hostile responses from the victim and impede forgiveness (Schmitt et al., 2004; Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004; Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). Other research has examined the extent to which amends communicate that the offender's interpretation of the offense is similar to that of the victim's (referred to as "perceptual validation"). Eaton, Struthers, and Santelli (2006) examined whether perceptual validation mediated the amends-forgiveness link by using hypothetical transgression scenarios between co-workers as well as online, game-based transgressions. The results of this work indicated that amends facilitated forgiveness, in part, because they communicated agreement with the victims' interpretation of the event. These researchers argued that perceptual validation facilitated the victim's forgiveness by increasing the victim's positive self-view.

Conveying sincerity and conveying agreement with the victim's interpretation of the event may be important aspects of amends that will effectively elicit forgiveness. However, if amends are to promote forgiveness in romantic relationships, they may need to communicate more than sincerity and agreement. Specifically, they may need to convey that the victim's thoughts and feeling about the hurtful event are accurately understood, accepted and valued by the offender and that the offender genuinely cares about the victim and his or her suffering. Understanding, validation and care are components of partner responsiveness, a key construct in the literature on close relationships.

Partner Responsiveness

Partner responsiveness encompasses the concepts of understanding, validation and care. Understanding involves taking on and elaborating the partner's point of view such that one accurately identifies core features of the partner's experience (e.g., feelings, needs) and demonstrates insight into the meaning of the experience for the partner. Validation involves conveying that the partner's experiences are accepted, legitimate and valued; it need not imply agreement. Care refers to the affection, warmth, interest and concern one has towards one's partner (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008; Reis, Clarke, & Holmes, 2004; Reis & Patrick, 1996).

Expressions of responsiveness refer to the partner behaviours that communicate understanding, validation and care. Perceived partner responsiveness can refer to global or situation-specific perceptions of a partner's understanding, validation and care (Lemay & Clarke, 2008). Specifically, global perceptions of partner responsiveness refer to the overarching belief that one's central needs, goals and values are understood and validated by the partner, and that one is generally cared for by the partner. Situation-specific perceptions of responsiveness refer to

the belief that one's feelings, thoughts and needs in a specific event (e.g., an argument) are understood and validated by the partner, and that the partner genuinely cares about one's experience.

Research has demonstrated an important role of expressing understanding, validation and care for constructive negotiation of conflict and overall relationship well-being. Indeed, partners who report feeling generally happy with their relationship demonstrate responsive behaviour during conflict discussions, such as a willingness to listen to their partner's perspectives, communicating understanding, and conveying validation of their partner's experience through verbal statements and other non-verbal indications. Such behaviours serve to de-escalate the conflict (Gottman, 1979, 1994). By contrast, partners who report heightened feelings of distress in their relationship noticeably engage in less responsive behaviour during conflict discussion, often engaging in behaviours that are mutually unempathic and invalidating (e.g., attacking the partner's traits, criticizing their expressed feelings and thoughts; e.g., Clements, Stanley, & Markman, 2004; Gottman, 1979; Rogge & Bradbury, 1999; Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002). Such behaviours only serve to escalate the conflict and may weaken the value of the more positive interactions partners may have together (Gottman, 1994). Furthermore, research from the related literature on social support suggests that, in stressful situations, when one partner responds to the other's need for support in a manner that communicates empathy and care— aspects of responsiveness—these behaviours bolster the recipient's sense of security in the relationship and his/her belief that the partner will be available to provide support and care when needed (Feeney & Collins, 2003).

Perceiving that a partner is responsive (i.e. perceived partner responsiveness) appears to explain, at least in part, why a number of partner behaviours contribute to good relationship

functioning. For example, provisions of social support that are perceived by the recipient to be well-tuned to his or her feelings, needs and desires in the stressful situation can promote feelings of benevolence and relationship trust over the course of time (Cutrona, 1996). Moreover, longitudinal daily diary studies have shown that when people make disclosures of emotional significance to their partner, these disclosures are associated with subsequent increases in their feelings of intimacy and closeness, in part, because they perceive their partner to have been understanding, validating and caring following their disclosures (Laurenceau, Feldman Barrett, & Pietromonace, 1998; Laurenceau, Feldman Barrett, & Rovine, 2005; Manne et al., 2004).

The association between partner responsiveness and relationship functioning is widely recognized in clinical interventions with couples. In therapy, partners work on developing their ability to express greater understanding, validation and care for each other's experiences, as well as increasing their ability to perceive and recognize their partner's attempts at being responsive (Reis et al., 2004). Efforts to increase partner responsiveness also play a central role in interventions aimed specifically at helping couples to forgive and recover from the impact of transgressions (Gordon et al., 2005). In such interventions, partners are guided to elaborate their understanding of each other's experience of the event (e.g., hurtful feelings and unmet needs, motivations underlying behaviour in the event, personal and relationship history contributing to the event) and to communicate empathy and an appreciation for each other's experience (e.g., Di Blasio, 2000; Gordon et al., 2005; Hargrave, 1994; Worthington, 1998).

Overall, the research on the association between responsiveness and couples' constructive conflict engagement and relationship well-being indicates the potential role of expressions of responsiveness (responsive behaviour) and perceived partner responsiveness in promoting forgiveness for relationship transgressions. Furthermore, the fact that perceived partner

responsiveness appears to at least partly underlie the benefits of partner behaviours on relationship functioning (e.g., support behaviours during stressful situations, emotional disclosure) suggests that it may also mediate the amends-forgiveness link. However, there is currently little empirical research examining the role of responsiveness in relation to forgiveness for real-life transgressions occurring within couples. Typically, research has focused on examining how the *victim's* emotional empathy or responsiveness towards the offender (i.e. feelings of compassion, sympathy) facilitates forgiveness (e.g., Fincham, Paleari, & Regalia, 2002; McCullough et al., 1997; McCullough et al., 1998; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005) and has largely neglected the impact of the offender's responsiveness towards the victim.

There are a number of reasons why expressing that one understands, validates and cares for the victim might help the victim forgive. One reason is that responsiveness may attenuate the emotional distress and relationship threat that are created when transgressions occur. Indeed, relationship transgressions result when the relationship's norms and the person's expectations of his or her partner's behaviour in the relationship are defied (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Feeney, 2005; Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002; Metts, 1994). In turn, the victim may feel that he or she, and the relationship in general, have been devalued or diminished in their importance (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006b; Feeney, 2005; Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998). Moreover, in light of expectation and rule violations, victims may feel unsure about the offender's future behaviour (e.g., will they hurt me again?) and may raise doubts about the relationship's general stability and safety (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Emmers-Sommer & Canary, 1996). Thus, in reaction to a transgression, victims feel hurt, angry, anxious, and generally distressed (Leary et al., 1998). Following such reactions, if the offender takes on the victim's perspective, expresses an accurate understanding and acceptance of the victim's hurt, and shows

the victim that he or she cares about the victim's feelings and the relationship (i.e. express responsiveness), the victim may feel reassured about his or her value to the offender as well as the importance of the relationship. Furthermore, expressing responsiveness could help restore the sense that the offender is emotionally attuned to the victim and sharing in the same reality (i.e. intimacy). As such, expressing responsiveness can facilitate positive feelings and attitudes toward one's partner that occur when one forgives.

Master's Work as the Foundation for the Present Investigation²

The purpose of my Master's study was to examine the relationships among offers of amends, perceived partner responsiveness and forgiveness within romantic couples, and to test perceived partner responsiveness as a mediator of the amends-forgiveness link. It sought to address a number of limitations in the existent amends-forgiveness literature. First, it sought to offer a corrective to the dearth of studies that have examined the relationship between offers of amends and forgiveness in the unique context of romantic relationships and, in particular, the mediating mechanisms underlying the amends-forgiveness association in such relationships. Second, it examined real-life transgressions whereas the majority of research had used hypothetical scenarios. Third, several researchers who had examined the amends-forgiveness link using people in romantic relationships had: 1) acquired participants' report on transgressions occurring across a range of relationships (e.g., McCullough et al., 1997, McCullough et al., 1998, Bono et al., 2008), thereby potentially limiting our understanding of unique patterns that could emerge within romantic relationships, 2) used global measures of

² This section of this thesis represents a summary of relevant content of the methodology, results, discussion and limitations of my Master's work, portions of which were submitted for publication and appear in the article "The role of sincere amends and perceived partner responsiveness in forgiveness" (Pansera & La Guardia, in press). As per Wiley-Blackwell editorial policy, content of one's article may be re-used in theses without written editorial permission.

having received an apology and/or amends instead of assessing distinct components (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a; Bono et. al., 2008; McCullough et al., 1997, McCullough et al., 1998), and 3) used measures of forgiveness that were descriptive (e.g, Kelley, 1998, Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) or a single-item (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a), and did not seem to capture some of the core features of forgiveness discussed in the literature.

My Master's study addressed these limitations by examining real-life transgressions in romantic relationships and by elaborating the measurement of amends and forgiveness in romantic couples. Most importantly, it introduced perceived partner responsiveness as a predictor of forgiveness and as a mediator of the amends-forgiveness link.

For my Master's work, I predicted that offers of amends and perceived partner responsiveness would be associated with forgiveness, such that the more the offender was perceived to have offered amends to his/her partner and the more the offender was perceived to have been responsive, the more forgiving the partner would be. I also expected that amends and partner responsiveness would be positively correlated and that partner responsiveness would, at least in part, mediate the amends-forgiveness link.

In my Master's study, individuals who were currently in heterosexual romantic relationships (i.e. married, common-law, or dating for at least 6 months) were asked to participate in an online study which examined the ways individuals responded to their partner's attempts to seek their forgiveness following a hurtful event. A sample of 138 people was recruited (151 women, 37 men) from the University of Waterloo's undergraduate and graduate student population as well as from the wider Kitchener-Waterloo community. The average age of participants was 23.2 years (range of 18 to 45 years) and the majority of participants ($N = 139$; 73.9%) identified being in exclusive dating relationships (i.e., a committed dating relationship

with one partner). The remaining participants identified as married ($N = 20$; 10.6%), common law ($N = 13$; 6.9%), engaged ($N = 10$; 5.3%), or in a casual dating relationship ($N = 6$; 3.2%). Participants reported being involved in these relationships for an average of 2.89 years (range = 6 months to 24 years).

Participants completed reports of their relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction). Then, they were instructed to recall and give a description of a specific event in which their partner's attitudes, actions or words caused them personal distress (e.g., hurt, anger, sadness) and for which their partner had made an effort to seek their forgiveness. Specifically, participants were asked to describe an event that was, at least to a certain extent, still currently unresolved for them (i.e. to some degree they still had not "moved beyond" the negative feelings and/or thoughts associated with the event or with their partner's actions). Participants then completed measures assessing perceptions of the event's severity and their partner's intentions and level of responsibility for the event. Finally, they completed measures newly designed for this study assessing the extent to which they thought their partner had offered sincere amends, had demonstrated responsiveness to their experience of the hurtful event, and had forgiven their partner.

Analyses of these data indicated that that the more people perceived their partner to have offered amends and shown understanding and validation (responsiveness) of their experience of the event, the more forgiving they were of the partner (amends: $r = .40$, $p < .001$; responsiveness: $r = .50$, $p < .001$). Moreover, offers of amends and partner responsiveness were very strongly, and positively correlated ($r = .77$, $p < .001$), indicating that the more people perceived their partner to have offered amends, the more they also perceived their partner to have conveyed that

they had understood and validated their experience of the hurtful event.³ In support of the finding of prior research, the more people were satisfied with their relationship, the more forgiving they were of their partner (satisfaction: $r = .45, p < .001$). Also, satisfaction was correlated with perceived partner responsiveness and offers of amends such that the more people were satisfied with their relationship, the more they perceived their partner to have been responsive to their experience of the hurtful event ($r = .27, p < .001$) and to have offered amends ($r = .17, p < .05$). Finally, the more severe the event, the less forgiving people were of their partner ($r = -.39, p < .001$). Event severity was not significantly correlated with perceptions of partner responsiveness ($r = -.05, n.s.$) or of having received amends ($r = .04, n.s.$)

Of particular interest, analyses suggested that the relationship of offers of amends to forgiveness was moderated by relationship satisfaction and event severity. With regard to relationship satisfaction, *both* amends and responsiveness showed unique, positive direct effects on forgiveness in situations where relationship satisfaction was low, whereas in high satisfaction relationships only responsiveness did. As set forth in my Master's thesis, one interpretation of these results relates to the differences in the benevolent feelings and attitudes and the feelings of mistrust that may differentiate people involved in low versus high satisfaction relationships. When their relationship satisfaction is low, partners hold less benevolent feelings and attitudes towards their partner, and may be more mistrustful of the intentions underlying their behaviour (see Holmes and Murray, for a review). As such, when a hurtful event erupts in such a relational climate, the victim may require direct and repeated offers of reparation to feel reassured of the partner's good intentions and of their desire to preserve the relationship. However, people who

³Because of their large correlation, the extent to which sincere amends and perceived partner responsiveness represented separate constructs was examined by submitting all items to a principal components factor extraction with promax rotation. The presence of separate constructs was suggested when two eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged. Items from each measure loaded strongly on their respective factors and no significant overlaps were found. As such, these two constructs were considered to be distinct albeit highly correlated.

are happy and highly satisfied in their relationships can draw upon the trust and general feelings of goodwill they already have towards their partner in order to help them negotiate the hurtful event. Indeed, people in happier relationships tend to behave more responsively towards each other during conflict situations rather than invalidating and rejecting one another (e.g., Gottman, 1979, 1994). As such, responsive behaviour may more easily prompt forgiveness because it readily activates the positive bonds that exist within the relationship.

With regard to event severity, results indicated that in situations where the event severity was high, *both* amends and responsiveness showed unique, positive direct effects on forgiveness, whereas in low severity situations only responsiveness did. Severe transgressions that have incurred more damage provoke greater negative feelings and distress (Rusbult et. al., 2005), as well as increased doubt about the partner's intentions and future behaviour and the security of the relationship (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a). Accordingly, in such situations, offenders might need to offer more active and elaborate amends to provide the victim with reassurance about their relationship commitment, trustworthiness, and that the event will not happen again. Moreover, if transgressions are perceived to have disrupted the equity and justice governing the relationship (Worthington, 2003), then the "injustice gap" (Worthington, 2003, p. 39) or "interpersonal debt" (Exline & Baumesiter, 2000) triggered by highly severe events may be more considerable than those in low-severity situations. As such, in addition to conveying responsiveness, the offender may need to offer amends in an effort to compensate for the hurt incurred and to re-establish perceptions of justice and relational equity when event severity is high (Exline & Baumesiter, 2000; Rusbult et al., 2005; Worthington, 2003).

In summary, the results of my Master's study suggested that perceived partner responsiveness is a strong predictor of forgiveness and an important mediator of the effects of

amends on forgiveness. Results also suggested that the effects of amends on forgiveness may be moderated by relationship satisfaction and event severity.

Similar to most research in the forgiveness literature, my Master's study used a cross-sectional, survey method in which only the victim's perceptions of the hurtful event and of the offender's behaviour were assessed. This methodology has several limitations.

First, this correlational design precludes assertions concerning any causal relationships between offers of amends, partner responsiveness, and forgiveness. In this regard, an experimental design that manipulates the victim's receipt of offers of amends and expressions of understanding, validation and care (i.e. responsiveness) is necessary to address such issues.

Second, this design did not allow me to examine the offender's actual attempts to offer amends to the victim or direct attempts at expressing understanding, validation, and care for his/her perspectives. Indeed, the extent to which one's perceptions of partner responsiveness and offers of amends are related to expressions of these behaviours during a specific interaction continues to be a question for empirical investigation. With regards to amends, some research has shown that there are weak associations between expressed amends components (e.g., remorse) and the recipient's corresponding perceptions, and that the presence of one component (e.g., explicit apology) can be inferred based on the presence of another (e.g., compensation) even if it was never offered (Schmitt et al., 2004; Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). However, these associations have been examined using hypothetical transgressions occurring between strangers or imagined friendships and thus may not generalize to the context of real-life transgression in romantic relationships. Indeed, research has suggested that people's perceptions and reactions to offers of amends (e.g., ratings of effectiveness, demonstrations of trusting behaviour) differ according to whether the offers are imagined rather than actually offered, and that individuals in

close relationships may scrutinize their partners' intentions in the hurtful event more closely than the content of the amends (De Cremer, Pillitula, & Folmer, 2011). With regards to responsiveness, some studies have demonstrated no to weak associations between coders' ratings of one partner's responsive behaviour in a situation and the other partner's perceptions of responsiveness (e.g., Lemay & Clark, 2008; Maisel et al., 2008). Yet, other studies have demonstrated moderate to large associations between coders' and participants' ratings of constructs similar to responsiveness (e.g., social support; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Cutrona, Hessling, & Suhr, 1997). Some researchers have argued that perceived partner responsiveness is, in large part, subjectively construed (Lemay, Clarke & Feeney, 2007; Lemay & Clarke, 2008).

Aim and Hypotheses of Dissertation

The overarching goal of my dissertation is to experimentally test the contributions of offers of amends and expressions of understanding, validation, and care (i.e. responsiveness) in predicting forgiveness, and to examine whether the effects of these manipulated factors are moderated by relationship satisfaction and event severity. To this end, I designed an experimental paradigm in which I manipulate whether the partner who discloses feelings about an unresolved, hurtful event (victim) receives a videotaped response from his/her partner in which this partner (offender) expresses:

- 1) responsiveness only (i.e. understanding, validation, care),
- 2) amends only,
- 3) both responsiveness and amends, or
- 4) neither responsiveness nor amends (control group).

My Master's work suggested that event severity and relationship satisfaction moderate the effects of amends on forgiveness. In highly severe events and in relationships low in satisfaction, amends uniquely predicted forgiveness, above and beyond the effects of responsiveness. In contrast, amends had no unique impact when event severity was low and relationship satisfaction was high. Based on these results, I predicted an interaction between offers of amends, responsiveness, and relationship satisfaction.

At low levels of relationship satisfaction, I predicted that victims who received both an offer of amends as well as an expression of responsiveness would exhibit greater forgiveness than those who received an expression of responsiveness only, an offer of amends only, or neither response. I also predicted that at low levels of relationship satisfaction, victims who received either an expression of responsiveness only or an offer of amends only would be more

forgiving than victims who received neither. Although I advanced no hypotheses concerning whether receiving an expression of responsiveness alone or an offer of amends alone would elicit greater forgiveness, I planned to conduct exploratory analyses to examine any emerging differences between these two conditions.

With regards to high levels of relationship satisfaction, I predicted that victims who received some form of response from the partner—both an expression of responsiveness and offer of amends, an expression of responsiveness alone, or an offer of amends alone—would be more forgiving than victims who received no response. I advanced no hypotheses concerning whether receiving both an expression of responsiveness and offer of amends would elicit greater forgiveness than either component alone, or whether receiving an expression of responsiveness alone or an offer of amends alone would elicit greater forgiveness than no response. I planned to conduct exploratory analyses to examine any such emerging differences.

Based on the results of my Master's thesis, I also predicted that at high levels of event severity, victims who received both an expression of responsiveness and an offer of amends would exhibit greater forgiveness than those who received an expression of responsiveness only, an offer of amends only, or neither component. I also predicted that victims who received either an expression of responsiveness alone or an offer of amends alone would be more forgiving than victims who received neither. Although I advanced no hypotheses concerning whether receiving an expression of responsiveness alone or an offer of amends alone would prove to elicit greater forgiveness, I planned to conduct exploratory analyses to examine any emerging differences between the two conditions. With regards to low levels of event severity, I predicted that victims who received some form of partner response—both an expression of responsiveness and offer of amends, an expression of responsiveness alone, or an offer of amends alone—would be more

forgiving than victims who received no response. Although I advanced no hypotheses concerning whether receiving both an expression of responsiveness and offer of amends would promote greater forgiveness than either component alone, or whether receiving an expression of responsiveness alone or an offer of amends alone would yield greater differential forgiveness, I planned to conduct exploratory analyses.

The results of my Master's thesis suggested that victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness mediate the effects of the offenders' offers of amends. In the current study, I examined whether the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness mediated the effects of the offenders' actual offers of amends as well as direct expressions of understanding, validation and care. I predicted that perceived partner responsiveness would mediate the effects of such offers on forgiveness and emerge as an important predictor of forgiveness.

To summarize, one aim of my dissertation was to manipulate the presence versus absence of two factors—offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness—in order to examine their effects on forgiveness, as well as the possible moderation of these effects by severity and satisfaction. However, because the content of these two factors was spontaneously produced by participants, rather than scripted by the experimenter, the variability in the content of the offender's offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness could also affect the victims' evaluations of these offers as well as their level of forgiveness. As such, another aim of my dissertation was to code behaviours indicative of the offender's offers of amends (i.e. remorse, responsibility, compensation, forbearance) and responsiveness (i.e. understanding, validation, care) to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the associations between victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness and outside (coder) ratings of responsive behaviour? Likewise, what are the associations

between victims' perceptions of partner amends and outside (coder) ratings of amends behaviour?

- 2) How does the content of offenders' actual offers of amends and responsiveness relate to forgiveness for real-life transgressions in romantic relationships? Specifically, do more elaborate offers facilitate forgiveness, and are there specific components of the offenders' offers that are especially effective?

To answer these questions, three independent coders used micro-level and macro-level coding schemes to rate the offender's offers of amends and responsive behaviour. These schemes were developed and adapted from existing coding schemes of these constructs and drawn from theory. The micro-coding of offers of amends was intended to capture specific behavioural indicators of the offender's remorse and/or regret, acceptance of responsibility, offers of compensation, and forbearance or promises for betterment in future behaviour. The micro-coding of responsiveness was intended to capture specific behavioural indicators of the offender's understanding, validation and care for the victim's experience of the hurtful event. The macro-coding of amends and responsive behaviour were intended to capture the coder's global impressions of the extent to which the offender communicated amends and responsiveness. The victims' perceptions of the extent to which they felt their partner had expressed amends and responsiveness were assessed through the use of the same items that coders used to make their macro-ratings.

With reference to my first question, I hypothesized that victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness would be positively associated with the coders' micro-level ratings responsive behaviour. Specifically, I expected that victims would perceive greater partner responsiveness when the coders rated the offender as having offered greater depth of understanding, validation

and care. I also hypothesized that victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness would be positively correlated with the coders' global perceptions of the offenders' responsive behaviours. With regards to amends, I hypothesized that victims' perceptions of partner amends would be positively associated with the coders' micro-level ratings of responsive behaviours. Specifically, I expected that victims would perceive their partner to have made greater amends when coders rated the offender as having offered more signs of amends (remorse, responsibility, compensation, forbearance). I also hypothesized that the victims' perceptions of their partners' amends would be positively correlated with the coders' global ratings of the offender's offers of amends. Coders' global and micro-level responsiveness ratings were expected to be positively correlated and global and micro-level amends ratings were expected to be as well.

Research has shown that the more the offender offers amends, the more forgiving the victim will be (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a; Bono et al., 2008; Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Hannon et al., 2010; Kelley, 1998; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough et al., 1997, Scher & Darley, 1997). Based on this research, I predict that the more the offender offers amends, as indexed by the coders' micro and macro overall amends ratings, the more forgiving the victim will be. Moreover, some research shows that amends components similarly predict forgiveness (Scher & Darley, 1997) and other research shows that the relative strength of the components differs depending on the recipient's needs (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). For example, research has shown that expressing remorse may more strongly predict forgiveness than the other components in individuals who have a relational self-construal, thus suggesting that remorse may more strongly predict forgiveness in romantic relationships (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). As such, I will examine the extent to which each of the amends components uniquely predict forgiveness, and whether remorse more strongly predicts forgiveness than the other components. With regards to

responsiveness, research has shown that the more one is perceived to have been responsive to his or her partner during interaction (understanding, validating, caring), the more the partner experiences intimacy (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Laurenceau et al., 2001) and forgiveness (Pansera & La Guardia, in press). Based on this research, I predicted that the more the offenders express responsiveness, as indexed by the coders' micro and macro overall responsiveness ratings, the more forgiving the victim will be. The majority of research has examined partner responsiveness as an aggregate construct (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Laurenceau et al., 2001; Maisel et al., 2008; Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2009; Manne et al., 2004; Lemay et al., 2008) rather than examining the contribution of its unique components. In theory, understanding, validation and care are discussed as distinct components but they are more difficult to separate in practice (Maisel et al., 2008). Only one study that I am aware of has examined the unique contributions of one partner's actual expressions of these components on the other's outcome, and the results of this study showed that none of these components predicted intimacy in men and that only understanding and validation predicted intimacy in women (Mitchell, Castellani, Herrington, Doss, & Synder, 2008). In the present study, I examined the unique contributions of the offenders' expressions of understanding, validation and care on the victim's forgiveness and I will examine whether these effects differ by gender.

Method

Participants

Ninety-one heterosexual couples were initially recruited to participate in a study on couples' communication styles for positive and negative events in their relationship. Recruitment was conducted via advertisements in the Kitchener-Waterloo community, psychology credit and paid participant pools at the University of Waterloo, and mass emails to UW graduate students and staff. Participation in the study was restricted to married and common-law couples (i.e. living together for at least 1 year), and couples who had been dating for at least 6 months.

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 62 years old ($M = 25.23$ years; $SD = 9.59$ years). Approximately half of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian ($N = 35$, 54.7%), approximately 20% as Asian ($N = 13$), and approximately 20% identified as another ethnic background (East Indian, $N = 6$; European, $N = 2$; Hispanic, $N = 1$; other ethnic background, $N = 4$; no response, $N = 4$). Participants were exclusively dating for more than 6 months (i.e. a committed dating relationship with one partner; $N = 38$, 59.4%), married ($N = 19$, 29.7%), or common-law (i.e. living together for more than 1 year; $N = 7$, 10.9%). The average relationship length was 4.68 years ($SD = 8.21$ years; range = 6 months to 40.25 years).

Procedure

Couples completed the study over the course of 2 sessions in the lab at UW. During the first session, couples read the consent form and I or a trained research assistant reviewed important aspects of the study. Once each member of the couple had consented to participation, each member completed a 45-minute survey that included measures of individual differences (e.g., self-esteem, personality), perceptions of relationship functioning (e.g., satisfaction, commitment), and current psychological well-being (e.g., depression, anxiety). Seven couples

withdrew from the study after having completed session 1. Their data are eliminated from all analyses.

The couples returned to the lab on a separate day, usually within a week of their first session. On this second occasion, they completed the experimental paradigm. I began by reviewing important aspects of the study. I then lead each member of the couple into a different room where participants answered questions about current substance/alcohol abuse and their history of domestic violence. Couples in which either one or both members reported current substance abuse or any history of physical or sexual abuse within the partnership were screened out of the experimental paradigm and engaged in a “positive activity” (to be described later). Seven couples were screened out of the experimental task based on their responses and their data are eliminated from all analyses. The remaining couples completed the study, which took between 2.5 and 3 hours.

Each member of the couple remained in his/her separate room and completed a 20-minute survey on various individual and relationship functioning variables. Once these measures were completed, partners were randomly assigned a “role” that each would take on over the course of the study. “Partner A,” the “victim,” was told that he/she would recall and recount an unresolved negative experience in which his/her partner might have said something or did something that was hurtful. The other partner, “Partner B,” the “offender,” was told that he/she would be responding to the “victim’s” account of that negative experience⁴.

While the offender waited in the separate room, I reviewed the explicit set of instructions which guided the victim in the selection and recollection of a hurtful event (Appendix A).

Specifically, the victim was asked to recall and provide a brief written description of a **specific**

⁴ Unfortunately, the viewing condition to which one of the couples had been assigned was not recorded. As such, their data was eliminated from all main analyses

event that occurred **within the last year** in which his or her partner's attitudes, actions or words caused him/her personal distress (e.g., hurt, anger) and which, at least to a certain extent, was **still currently unresolved** for the victim (i.e. to some degree the victim still had not "moved beyond" the negative feelings and/or thoughts associated with the event or with his/her partner's actions). These criteria were specified so that for each of the recalled events there would be greater variability in levels of forgiveness (not just uniformly high because the event was positively resolved). To aid with recollection and increased accuracy of participants' reports of the event, I gave explicit instructions to guide their selection of a hurtful, unresolved event (a method which has been used in prior work on forgiveness seeking and forgiveness-granting, e.g., Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Pansera & La Guardia, in press; Waldron & Kelley, 2005). First, participants were asked to choose a specific, unresolved event which had occurred within the last year (rather than generalizing across their conflicts with their partner). To aid in the recollection of such an event, the instructions also included a list of examples of potential hurtful events (e.g., he/she criticized me inappropriately or unfairly, he/she was dishonest with me about something). If participants recalled more than one unresolved event, they were instructed to select the one they better recalled. Likewise, if they had difficulty in recalling the details of an event they had chosen, they were instructed to choose another incident that they recalled better. After having reviewed the instructions with the victim, I left the room and allowed the victim to think about an event and offer a brief written description by answering 5 open-ended questions. These questions queried when the event occurred, where the event occurred, who was present at the time, and what actually occurred (the details of the event).

Once the victim had selected and written a short description of the event, I briefly reviewed the event with the victim to assess its appropriateness for the study. Specifically, I

verified whether the victim in fact viewed the event as currently unresolved and whether the event's magnitude was appropriate and manageable in the context of the research study. Events that I judged to be so severe as to risk creating major distress during or after completion of the study (e.g., legal offenses, substance abuse, domestic violence, incidents that the victim themselves thought could elicit notable fighting if discussed) would be rejected. No couples were excluded based on these criteria. In cases where the victim could not recall any incident that was currently unresolved ($N= 11$), the couple was immediately integrated into the "positive activity" (to be described later). They did not complete the experimental paradigm, and all data were eliminated from the main analyses.

Once the event was approved for use in the study, the victim then completed a questionnaire that assessed his/her perceptions of the event (e.g., memory of the event's details, the event's prior occurrence, the event's severity). While the victim completed these questions, the offender was given the victim's written description of the event to review and was also given a copy of the questionnaire to complete.

After the victim completed the questionnaire, I engaged the victim in a semi-structured, video-recorded interview about the details and history of the hurtful event as well as the impact and meaning of this event for the victim (Appendix B). The victim was aware that the video-recorded interview would be shown to his or her partner and had approved this when consent to participation was obtained. Once the interview was completed, I showed the video-recording of this interview to the offenders who watched it alone in their separate room. Once the offender had viewed the victim's video, the offender was asked to immediately complete a questionnaire that assessed both emotional empathy and emotional distress reactions to the victim's video.

Next, I engaged the offender in a three-part interview. Each part of the interview was video-recorded in separate segments. In part 1, I asked the offender to open-endedly share his/her perspective and personal experience of the event as well as his/her reaction to the victim's video. This segment was employed to allow the offender to express his/her thoughts and feelings about the event, but was not used in the experimental manipulation. In part 2, the offender was engaged in a semi-structured interview in which he/she was guided to express understanding, validation and care of the victim's experience of the event; he/she was asked to summarize the key thoughts and feelings disclosed by the victim and to adopt the victim's perspective in explaining the significance of the hurtful event for the victim (see Appendix C for all interview questions). In part 3, the offender was guided to make an offer of amends to the victim in the spirit of further reconnecting with the victim around the event (see Appendix C for all interview questions). One participant declined to record the amends segment; the data acquired from both members of this couple were excluded from the main analysis. Once the offender had completed all parts of the interview, he/she was asked to complete a questionnaire that assessed the offender's motivation to work towards further closeness and reparation with the victim around the event. The victim was then randomly assigned to 1 of 4 conditions in which he/she viewed:

- 1) the responsiveness videotape only (part 2 of the interview)
- 2) the offer of amends videotape only (part 3 of the interview)
- 3) *both* the responsiveness *and* offers of amends videotapes
- 4) neither of the videos (control group).

The offender was aware that part or all of his or her video-recorded interview would be shown to the victim and had approved this when consent to participation was obtained. Immediately after viewing the assigned segments, the victim completed measures assessing his/her level of

empathic and emotionally distressful reactions to what was viewed, and the extent to which he/she perceived the offender to have expressed responsiveness and offered amends. Victims who were in the control condition did not view any videotapes. They were asked to complete the two questionnaires based on how they were feeling and thinking about their partner “right now” after having discussed the hurtful event. All victims also completed a measure assessing their level of forgiveness toward the offender (The BICAR; Appendix D) as well as a measure assessing their motivation to work towards further closeness and reparation with the offender.

Both partners were finally reunited in another room and left to interact for 7 minutes. After the interaction had taken place, both partners were once again led into separate rooms where they completed a questionnaire assessing how comfortable, open, warm and engaged they felt in the interaction with each other. Then, while in separate rooms, they also completed the written Positive Activity, which was used as a mood booster following the completion of the study. In the Positive Activity, participants were asked to write: 1) up to 5 positive events they had experienced with their partner, 2) up to 5 positive characteristics their partner possesses, and 3) up to 5 positive qualities characterising their relationship. After completing the Positive Activity forms, the couple was reunited and I facilitated a brief discussion whereby each member of the couple was invited to discuss the responses they described in their forms. All participants completed the written task and participated in the discussion.

Following the Positive Activity, couples were debriefed and compensated for their participation in the study. A brief telephone follow-up was conducted with each member of the couple approximately 1 week after the lab session to assess for adverse effects following the study. No adverse effects were reported

Couples who completed the study for monetary remuneration over the course of 2 sessions received \$70/couple (\$35/person), and participants who completed the study for course credit received 3.5 credits towards a psychology class for participation. Couples participating in the study for monetary remuneration who were screened out of the study were compensated \$30/couple (\$15/person) for their time involvement (including their participation in session 1 of the study and the screening and the Positive Activity). Participants participating for course credit who were screened out of the study received 1.5 credits for their time involvement. All participants received 1 free movie ticket, and the couples names were entered into a draw to win one of two \$50 gift packages (1 ballot/couple).

Overall, the data of 27 couples' were eliminated for the various reasons previously described. In the final sample of 64 couples, 15 couples were run in the responsiveness alone viewing condition, 18 in the amends alone viewing condition, 16 in the responsiveness and amends viewing condition, and 15 in the control condition. Thirty-six of the participants occupying the "victim" role were female (56.3%) and 28 were male (43.8%).

Measures

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured by the State-Relationship Questionnaire, Trait Form (O'Connor, Bissell, Rohrbaugh, Shoham, 1999; STR-Q). The scale is comprised of 24 positive and negative adjectives that participants rate on 9-point Likert scales according to either how their partner usually makes them feel (e.g., "Content", "Understood", "Rejected", "Unappreciated") or how they usually feel toward their partner (e.g., "Interested", "Connected", "Irritated", "Distant"). An overall score for satisfaction is derived by taking the difference between the average ratings of the positive items and the negative items.

The SRQ-T showed very good reliability ($\alpha = .91$). On average, participants reported levels of relationship satisfaction that were in the moderate range ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.85$).

Event severity. Three items were used to measure the victim's perceptions of the event's severity at the time the event occurred. Similar to assessments of perceived event severity in other forgiveness research (e.g., Fincham, Jackson, & Beach, 2005; Friesen, Fletcher, & Overall, 2005), the items in the current study assessed the extent to which the event was "distressful", "serious" and "hurtful" to the participant. These three items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale from "not at all" (1) to "extremely" (7). The severity scale showed very good reliability ($\alpha = .91$). The mean of the 3 items was computed to create an overall score, such that higher scores indicated higher perceived severity. On average, victims rated the events on the higher end of a 7-point Likert scale. ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.27$, range = 2.33 to 7).

Transgression-Related Questionnaire: Participants completed several items that assessed various details regarding the hurtful event. Using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "extremely" (7), participants rated how well they recalled the details of the event, the extent to which the event had negatively impacted their relationship with their partner, the offender's attempts to resolve or make amends for the event prior to the study, the extent to which the event was currently experienced as unresolved, and perceptions of their partner responsibility for the event. Participants also indicated when the event had occurred, and whether or not the event had occurred before.

Perceived Partner Responsiveness. Victims rated items that globally assessed the extent to which they perceived their partner to have been responsive based on the video-taped segments they viewed. These two items assessing perceived responsiveness were, "To what extent do you feel your partner understood your perspective and feelings regarding this event?" and "To what

extent do you think your partner validated and acknowledged your feelings regarding this event?" Victims who were in the control condition were asked to complete the same items with reference to thinking about the offender "right now." The mean of the understanding and validation items was used to create an overall composite score such that higher scores indicated greater perceived partner responsiveness. The perceived partner responsiveness scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$). In subsequent analyses both the composite score and the individual understanding and validation items were used.⁵

Perceived Offers of Partner Amends. Victims rated 4 items that assessed the extent to which their partners offered amends in the videotape. Items were designed to tap the following components of amends: acknowledgement of responsibility ("To what extent did your partner accept responsibility for this event?"), expressions of remorse ("To what extent did your partner convey remorse for this event?"), offers of compensation ("To what extent did your partner specify that they would "make it up to you" in some way?"), and expressions of forbearance ("To what extent did your partner promise in some way to avoid doing what they did in the future?"). All items were rated on 7-point Likert-type scales. Victims who were in the control condition were asked to complete the same items with reference to thinking about the offender "right now." The mean of these four items was used to create an overall score such that higher scores indicated that the offender was perceived to have offered more elaborate amends. The perceived offers of amends scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$). In subsequent analyses, both the composite amends score and the individual component items were used.

⁵ Unfortunately, at the time this measure was created, an item assessing care was not included in the measure. In the creation of the coding systems, I did make sure to create codes for care. As the reader will come to know, the micro and macro codes for care were not reliable and were thus eliminated from the analyses. As such, the victims' and coders' ratings of responsiveness coincided.

Forgiveness. The BICAR (Pansera & La Guardia, in press) was used to assess victims' forgiveness. This measure was created during my Master's work to respond to several limitations with some of the most well-known and empirically validated measures of forgiveness at the time [e.g., the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-12), McCullough et al., 1998; (TRIM-18), McCullough & Hoyt, 2002]. Specifically, some of the important features of forgiveness that had been discussed in the literature did not appear to be captured by these measures, and some of the more subtle ways in which forgiveness might manifest in longer-lasting couples did not seem to be represented. For example, Exline & Baumeister (2000) have suggested that it is possible that people can feel benevolent or hold conciliatory attitudes towards their partner but not be necessarily inclined to demonstrate these internal, forgiving attitudes through their actions. In existing measures, benevolent feelings and conciliatory attitudes towards the offender are assessed but behaviours are not (e.g., items in the Benevolence subscale of the TRIM-18). Moreover, although forgiveness is thought to involve acknowledging and "letting go" of negative feelings (e.g., Gordon et al., 2005, Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000), this dimension did not appear to be captured by existing measures. Finally, it seemed that the existing measures did not capture some of the subtler motives to avoid one's partner and to retaliate toward and/or seek retribution from one's partner that might emerge for those in longer-term, ongoing, romantic relationships. In existing measures, the items used to assess such motivations following a transgression seemed to reflect more extreme responses (e.g., "I cut off the relationship")—responses that more readily occur after higher severity transgressions or in less committed relationships. Paleari, Regalia, and Fincham (2009) noted these various concerns and created a new measure of forgiveness for married couples (Marital Offense-Specific Forgiveness Scale; MOFS) that they published after I had already designed this measure.⁶

⁶ The BICAR is similar to the MOFS in that the items assessing avoidance and retribution reflect more subtle rather

For the reasons outlined above, a new measure of situation-specific forgiveness for transgressions within romantic relationships was developed. Thirty-eight items were created to assess the following dimensions of forgiveness: 1) the persistence of negative feelings/attitudes towards one's partner about the event, 2) motivations to distance from or avoid one's partner in light of the hurtful event, 3) motivations to seek retribution or revenge for the hurtful event, 4) the presence of benevolent feelings and attitudes toward one's partner despite the hurtful event, 5) willingness to engage in conciliatory or constructive behaviour with one's partner, and 6) willingness to accept, acknowledge, and let go of one's negative emotions about the event. New items for this scale was based on the dimensions of forgiveness discussed in the literature and also included adaptations of items from other existing measures of forgiveness (e.g., TRIM-12; McCullough et., al 1998; TRIM-18; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004).

The factor structure of the forgiveness measure was examined in my Master's work. Using principle components factor analysis with a promax rotation, five clear factors emerged (all items loading at $> .60$, eigenvalues > 1). Thirty items represented these five factors—Benevolence (5 items), Innner Resolution (7 items), Conciliation (5 items), Avoidance (7 items), and Retribution (6 items) (i.e. BICAR). The Benevolence factor assesses the extent to which the person experiences benevolent feelings and attitudes toward his or her partner despite the hurtful event. The Inner Resolution factor assesses the extent to which the victim has accepted, resolved and “let go” of the feelings elicited by the event, and can “move forward” from the experience.

than extreme responses to relationship transgressions than those captured in other measures. Both measures also capture benevolence similarly. However, unlike the MOFS, the BICAR contains items specifically assessing the constructs of inner resolution and conciliatory behaviour, and the avoidance and retribution scales emerged as separate factors. More generally, the reliability and validity of the MOFS were examined in a sample of married couples from Northern Italy whereas those of the BICAR were examined in a more ethnically diverse sample of dating and married couples.

The Conciliation factor assesses the extent to which the partner is motivated to behave in a constructive and conciliatory manner towards his or her partner despite the hurtful event. The Avoidance factor assesses the extent to which the person is motivated to avoid and distance him or herself from the partner given the hurtful event. The Retribution factor assesses the extent to which the person continues to seek compensation (i.e. “payback”) from his or her partner for the hurt incurred, and wants the partner to feel distressed because of the event.

Pearson correlations between each of the 5 factors indicated that the factors were related in anticipated ways. The positive subscales--Benevolence, Inner Resolution and Conciliation-- were positively correlated (r 's = .56 to .64), and the negative subscales--Avoidance and Retribution-- were positively correlated ($r = .57$). The 3 positive subscales were negatively correlated with each of the 2 negative subscales (r 's = -.37 to -.53). The moderate correlations between the subscales suggested that they remain distinct components of forgiveness.

Results from my Master's study showed that each of the subscales of the forgiveness measure showed excellent reliability (Benevolence, $\alpha = .91$; Inner Resolution, $\alpha = .91$; Conciliation, $\alpha = .92$; Avoidance, $\alpha = .91$; Retribution, $\alpha = .91$). In addition, the composite forgiveness measure (a composite of the 5 subscales) correlated in expected ways with measures of event severity, attributions of partner responsibility and blame, relationship quality variables, and offers of sincere amends. Thus, the measure showed strong psychometric properties and replicated previous findings in the literature.

In the current study, scores for each of the 5 subscales were calculated by taking the mean of the items in the respective scale. Each of the subscales of the BICAR showed good reliability in the present study (Avoidance, $\alpha = .78$; Benevolence, $\alpha = .85$; Retribution, $\alpha = .84$, Inner

Resolution, $\alpha = .83$, Conciliation, $\alpha = .87$). The Pearson correlations between the subscales were moderate and in the expected directions. Subscale inter-correlations are presented in Table 1.

The 5 subscales were entered into a principal components factor analysis to determine whether a composite forgiveness measure was appropriate. The subscales all loaded onto a single factor (all loadings $> .66$), and thus an overall forgiveness score was computed by taking the mean across the avoidance and retribution scales (reverse scored) and the benevolence, conciliation, and inner resolution subscales. A higher overall scale score indicates greater forgiveness of one's partner.

Behavioural Coding for Offender Offers of Responsiveness and Offers of Amends

A micro-level coding scheme was created to assess the quality of the offender's expressions of responsiveness. This scheme measured the degree of understanding, validation and care expressed in the offender's response. The behavioural indicators of understanding, validation and care used in this coding schema are based on theoretical definitions and descriptions of these components in the literature (e.g., Maisel et al., 2008; Reis et al., 2004; Reis et al., 1996) as well as on existing schemes used to evaluate expressions of responsiveness during couples' interactions (Maisel et al., 2008) and conflict discussions (Gottman, 1994). The offender's expressions of *understanding* of the victim's experiences and perspectives of the hurtful event were evaluated using 3 items. These items coded the extent to which the offender made an effort to adopt his/her partner's perspective, accurately summarized or paraphrased the victim's expressed thoughts and feelings, and elaborated an understanding of "why" the event was hurtful or significant for the partner. The offender's expressions of *validation* of the victim's experiences and perspectives were assessed by 3 items. These items coded the extent to which the offender legitimized the event's meaning and its significance to the victim, normalized the

victim's experience, and expressed acceptance, support, and/or agreement of the victim's perspectives. The offender's expressions of *care* for the victim and his/her experiences were assessed using 2 items. These items coded the extent to which the offender expressed concern and compassion for the victim's experience of the event, and expressed love and/or affection for the partner. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert "intensity" scale with endpoints ranging from "not at all" to "a great deal." The verbatim micro-responsiveness items are listed in Table 2. A global, 3-item coding scheme of the offender's responsiveness was also created. Each item represented a general assessment of the extent to which the offender communicated understanding, validation and care, respectively. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints ranging from "not at all" to "completely." These items are reported in the Results section.

A micro-level coding scheme to assess the quality of the offender's offer of amends was created to assess the offender's expressions of remorse or regret, acceptance of responsibility, offers of compensation, and forbearance. The indicators of amends used in our coding schema are based on theoretical definitions and descriptions of offers of apology and amends in the literature (e.g., Blatz et al., 2009; Lazare, 2004; Scher & Darley, 1997; Schmitt et al., 2004), as well as descriptions and measures of broader forgiveness-seeking strategies (e.g., Kelley, 1998; Kelley & Waldron, 2005). Acceptance of responsibility was evaluated by 3 items that coded for whether or not the offender voiced his/her fault, defined his/her role in the hurtful event, and acknowledged the impact of his/her behaviour on the victim. Remorse or regret was evaluated by 5 items that coded for whether or not the offender said "I'm sorry," voiced remorse (e.g., "I feel badly about this"), engaged in self-castigation (e.g., "I was stupid"), expressed remorse non-verbally, and expressed regret (e.g., "I shouldn't have done that"). Forbearance was evaluated by

3 items that coded for whether or not the offender made constructive plans for improving his/her behaviour and/or the couple's interactions to reduce the likelihood that the event would reoccur, and made a promise that the event would not happen again. Finally, the offender's offers of compensation were evaluated by 2 items which coded for whether or not the offenders expressed that they would try to "make up" for the event in some way, and expressed wanting to reconnect as a couple. The micro-amends items are listed in Table 6. A global, 4-item coding scheme of the offender's offers of amends was also created. Each item represented a general assessment of the extent to which the offender communicated remorse, responsibility, compensation, and forbearance, respectively. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with endpoints ranging from "not at all" to "completely." These items are detailed in the Results section.

Three research assistants were trained to complete the coding of the responsiveness and amends videotapes. Training began with sessions in which theoretical definitions were reviewed (understanding, validation, and care; remorse and regret, acceptance of responsibility, forbearance and offers of compensation). The general coding procedures (e.g., use of rating scales) as well as all the specific codes for both the micro-level and global schemes were discussed and for practice there was group coding of the responsiveness and amends videos of 3 couples. Following this initial training, the research assistants coded responsiveness and amends videotapes of 10 couples. The research assistants met with me to view the videotapes in which ratings discrepancies were most evident, to discuss and reach consensus on the codes and to discuss variability in the ways that participants could express the items in question. Once this training period was complete, the three coders were assigned to code the responsiveness videos for all 64 couples. Coders completed this coding over the course of 7 weeks, coding videos for

approximately 10 couples each week. Coders met with me after each set of 10 videos was coded to further discuss and resolve rating issues.

Approach Taken to Forming Composite Variables

Psychometric analyses of the responsiveness and amends coding schemes began by examining the inter-rater reliability of each item using the item ratings of all 3 coders. Items that had a Cronbach's alpha of less than .60 were dropped from subsequent analyses. For the responsiveness-coding scheme, sub-component scores for understanding, validation, and care were computed by averaging across the items within the respective conceptual category, and an overall responsiveness score was computed by taking the average score across all of these items. Likewise, for the amends coding scheme, sub-component scores for remorse, responsibility, compensation, and forbearance were computed by summing across items within the conceptual category, and an overall amends score was computed by summing across all these items.⁷

The approach taken here to forming the overall composites and their sub-components by averaging or summing across items follows from a conceptualization of these constructs as emergent (Bollen & Lennox, 1991). There are several key ideas that define an emergent construct and which would make it appropriate to conceptualize responsiveness and amends as such. First, the construct is considered to be the outcome, or cumulative effect of the observed behaviours, rather than the underlying common cause of these. For example, overall responsiveness is said to “emerge” when one demonstrates behaviour indicative of

⁷ The responsiveness composites were formed by taking averages of to allow for a more readily interpretable understanding of the degree of the expression of the responsiveness subcomponents, and the overall responsiveness composites, with reference to assessment measure used (i.e. the 5-point Likert scale with ratings of 1 and 2 indicating low evidence of the construct, 3 indicating moderate evidence and ratings of 4-5 indicating high evidence for the construct). For example, if a victim was given a rating of 4 on one understanding item, a 3 on another understanding item, and a 2 on another understanding item, the average rating of 3 out of 5 is more readily interpreted as a moderate degree of expressed understanding than a sum of 9. For the micro-amends scale, which assessed whether a specific behaviour was present or not amongst a set number of possible behaviours, a sum was more readily interpretable. For example, a victim might have expressed 3 out of 5 possible remorse behaviours, and 6 out of 11 possible amends behaviours overall.

understanding, validation and care; responsiveness is the net outcome of these component behaviours, rather than being their common cause. Likewise, overall understanding is said to “emerge” when one demonstrates accurate paraphrasing and elaborates on the meaning of the hurt; understanding is the net outcome of these behaviours rather than being their common cause. Second, an emergent construct conceptualization of responsiveness and amends recognizes that there are different, somewhat interchangeable ways in which these outcomes can be produced. For example, one could offer amends in a number of alternative possible ways—through behaviours that indicate remorse (e.g., explicit apology), responsibility (e.g., admitting fault and role), compensation (e.g., planning a special event for partner), or forbearance (e.g., making a promise that it will not happen again). Likewise, one could express remorse in a number of alternative possible ways—through an explicit apology, some other expression of feeling badly, a statement of self-criticism, or stating what one should not have done (regret). Expressing amends in one way (e.g., showing remorse and responsibility) does not imply that one will express it in the other ways as well (e.g., offering compensation and forbearance as well). Likewise, expressing remorse in one way (explicit apology) does not imply that one express it in other ways as well (e.g., stating regret).

A familiar example of an emergent construct is physical fitness measured through its causes—for example, how much time per week a person spends running, playing tennis, and so forth. Behaviours like running and playing tennis are reasonably interchangeable in their effects on physical fitness. In addition, to measure physical fitness, the aggregate of these activities makes sense even if time spent running and time spent playing tennis happen not to correlate positively.

Thus, for emergent constructs, inter-item correlations and internal consistency of the composites are not relevant. For emergent constructs, capturing the breadth of different ways in which individuals could express the constructs is key, rather than any particular pattern of associations among these ways. To illustrate, if we left time spent in weight training out of the composite to measure physical fitness, this would be problematic even if weight training did not correlate with time spent running or playing tennis.

The approach taken here to forming composite scores by averaging or summing across items has been used before in other research on coding responsive behaviour (Maisel et al. 2008) and amends behaviour (e.g., Day & Ross, 2010). In this research, there has not been a great concern for demonstrating the inter-item correlations. Notably, in the following analyses, I examine the effects of the subcomponents as well as the overall composites. As noted by Day and Ross (2010), there is a possibility that examining the overall composite alone may mask the effects of the subcomponents, thus potentially limiting our understanding of the relative contributions of specific components.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Participants discussed a range of hurtful events. Similar to categorizations of hurtful events in other research (e.g., Friesen et al., 2005), participants in this study discussed hurtful events including criticisms and insulting behaviour (e.g., insulting one's family members, criticizing one's capacity to handle family finances), insensitive behaviour (e.g., not having dinner ready as requested; not participating in household chores), deceptions (e.g., withholding information from the partner that other close others had access to), perception of relationship betrayal (e.g., flirtatious behaviour, dating others soon after a break-up), sexual issues (e.g., rejection of sexual advances), failure to respect personal autonomy (e.g., partner insisting on the removal of a tattoo, criticizing partner's choice to spend time with friends), threats to relationship commitment (e.g., threats to leave relationship), and unkept promises (e.g., going back on a promise to attend an anticipated outing).

Approximately 78 percent of participants ($N = 50$) reported that the hurtful event had occurred within the last 6 months [within the week, ($N = 11$, 17.2%); 1-2 weeks ($N = 7$, 10.9%); 3-4 weeks ($N = 8$, 12.5%); 1-2 months ($N = 10$, 15.6%) or 3-6 months ($N = 14$, 21.9%)]. The remaining 22% of participants ($N = 14$) reported on a less recent event occurring between 6 and 12 months prior to the study. Participants reported that they recalled the details of these events quite well ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.10$).

Victims perceived the event severity and their partner's responsibility for the event to have been on the higher end of a 7-point Likert scale (severity: $M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.27$, range = 2.33 to 7; attribution of responsibility: $M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.26$). Victims' perceptions of the event's overall, negative impact on their relationship functioning was lower ($M = 3.19$ on a 7-point

Likert scale, $SD = 1.42$). Victims reported that their partner had made some attempts to resolve the situation or make amends prior to the study ($M = 4.12$ on a 7-point Likert scale, $SD = 1.73$), and that they currently experienced the event as somewhat unresolved ($M = 3.89$ on a 7-point Likert scale, $SD = 1.29$). Approximately half of the victims reported that the hurtful event had occurred previously ($N = 33$) and the other half reported that this event was a first-time offence ($N = 31$).

Psychometrics Properties of the Responsiveness and Amends Coding Schemes.

Micro-level Responsiveness Coding. Psychometric analysis of the micro-responsiveness coding scheme began by examining the inter-rater reliability of the understanding, validation and caring items. Based on the cut-off criterion (Cronbach's alpha $< .60$), 2 of the understanding items (i.e. summarizing/paraphrasing, understanding/elaborating meaning) and 2 of the validating items (i.e. legitimizing experience, normalizing) were retained. Both items that were created to code for expressions of care showed poor inter-rater reliability and were thus dropped from all subsequent analyses.

Table 2 contains all micro-responsiveness coding items and their inter-rater reliabilities. For further analyses, scores were computed by taking the average across the raters. Following the emergent construct conceptualization described earlier, the micro-understanding and validation subcomponent scores were created by taking the mean of the ratings of the two understanding items and the two validation items, respectively. A higher rating on the micro-understanding subcomponent indicated that the offender expressed a more accurate and elaborated understanding of the victim's feelings and perspectives of the hurtful event ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .75$, range = 1 to 4.33 on the 5-point Likert scale). A higher rating on the micro-validation subcomponent indicated that the offender expressed greater support and acceptance of the

victim's experience through legitimizing and normalizing the event ($M = 2.24$, $SD = .70$, range = 1 to 3.67 on the 5-point Likert scale). The overall, coders' micro-responsiveness score was created by using the mean of the 4 items, with a higher overall score indicating greater expression of understanding and validating behaviour by the offender ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .66$, range = 1 to 3.83 on the 5-point Likert scale). Table 3 shows the correlations among the 4 retained responsiveness items, which ranged from negligible to high.

Although the micro-responsiveness coding scheme was reduced to 4 items, this measure appears to capture the breadth and meaning of the responsiveness construct quite well. First, items on this measure reliably encompass core features of understanding and validation described in the literature and integrated into other behavioural coding systems (i.e., accurate paraphrasing, understanding the significance of the event in context of the partner's personal experience, normalizing the partners' experience, legitimizing and accepting the partner's perspectives). Second, I found moderate to strong correlations among the understanding, validation and caring items that were eliminated due to poor inter-rater reliability with the micro-understanding, validation and overall responsiveness composites (see Table 4). To some extent, this suggests that micro-understanding, validation and overall responsiveness composites capture the features of those eliminated items, and thus the breadth of the responsiveness concept.

Macro-Responsiveness Coding Scheme. The inter-rater reliabilities for the macro-understanding items were moderate ("To what extent did Partner A understand Partner B's perspectives and feelings about the event?" $\alpha = .72$; "To what extent did Partner B validate and acknowledge Partner A's feelings regarding this event?" $\alpha = .52$; "To what extent did Partner B communicate warmth, care or concern towards Partner A?" $\alpha = .58$). A macro-overall responsiveness composite was created by using the understanding and validation items to

allow for a direct comparison between coders' and victims' perceptions of overall responsiveness.⁸ The macro-understanding and validation items were strongly correlated ($r = .71, p < 0.001$) and each item was strongly correlated with the micro-responsiveness composite (understanding: $r = .93, p < 0.001$; validation: $r = .92, p < 0.001$). According to the coders' macro-ratings, offenders demonstrated moderate levels of understanding ($M = 3.51, SD = .70$, range = 1.00 to 5.00 on a 5-point Likert scale), validation ($M = 3.51, SD = .70$, range = 1.33 to 4.33 on a 5-point Likert scale), and overall responsiveness ($M = 3.35, SD = .63$, range = 1.17 to 4.50 on a 5-point Likert scale).

Table 5 shows the correlations between the coders' macro-ratings of the offenders' expressions of understanding, validation and overall responsiveness with the corresponding coders' micro-ratings. These correlations suggest that coders' global perceptions (macro ratings) were grounded in their observations of the concrete responsive behaviours.

Micro-Amends Coding Scheme. To examine the psychometric properties of the micro-amends coding scheme, I began by examining the inter-rater reliability of each of the 13 items using the item ratings of all 3 coders. Based on the cut-off criterion (Cronbach's alpha $< .60$), 11 behaviours were retained: 4 behaviours indicative of remorse (explicit apology, verbal expression of remorse, verbal expression of regret, self-criticism), 2 indicative of responsibility (acknowledging fault, acknowledging impact), 3 indicative of forbearance (promise that event does not re-occur, better future behaviour, better future team work) and 2 indicative of compensation (make-up, effort to reconnect). All items and their inter-rater reliabilities are presented in Table 6.

⁸The macro-caring item was dropped because the participants' did not complete an equivalent perceived caring item. However, I found moderate correlations between the macro-caring item and the macro-understanding and validation items ($r = .44$ and $r = .45$, respectively) and with the overall macro-responsiveness composite ($r = .49$). To some extent, this suggests that macro-understanding and validation items and the overall macro-responsiveness composite capture the features of the caring component.

Following the emergent construct conceptualization described earlier, a micro-amends overall score was created by summing across all of the items. A higher score on the overall amends composite indicated a greater number of expressed amends behaviours and thus a more elaborate offer of amends. Results indicated that offenders made limited demonstrations of specific amends behaviours expressing, on average, 3 out of the 11 coded amends behaviours ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.37$, range = .00 to 6.33 behaviours). Scores for each of the 4 amends subcomponents—remorse, responsibility, compensation and forbearance—were also created by summing the items in each of the subcomponents. Offenders enacted remorseful behaviour ($M = 1.33$ out of 4 possible behaviours, $SD = .76$, range = .00 to 3.00 behaviours; 47.75% of all amends behaviours), expressions of forbearance ($M = .89$ out of 3 possible behaviours, $SD = .67$, range = .00 to 2.00 behaviours; 31.96% of all amends behaviours), expressions of responsibility ($M = .43$ out of 2 possible behaviours, $SD = .49$, range = .00 to 1.67 behaviours; 15.51% of all amends behaviours), and expressions of compensation ($M = .14$ out of 2 possible behaviours, $SD = .38$, range = .00 to 2.00 behaviours; 4.86% of all amends behaviours). With the exception of a moderate correlation between remorseful behaviour and expressions of responsibility, the correlations between the subcomponents of amends were weak (see Table 7). Also, with the exceptions of a moderate correlation between the two micro-compensation behaviours ($r = .51$, $p < 0.001$), there were no significant correlations between the specific behaviours within subcomponents (remorse: $r_s < .18$, n.s; responsibility: $r = .06$, n.s.; forbearance: $r_s < .22$, n.s).

Macro-Amends Coding Scheme. The 4 items that comprised the macro-amends coding scheme were the same items rated by the victims to assess victims' perceptions of partner amends. All these items had good inter-rater reliability (see Table 8) and were retained. On average, coders' macro-ratings on 5-point Likert scales indicated that offenders appeared remorseful in their offer

of amends ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .91$, range: 1 to 5) and accepted personal responsibility for their part in the hurtful event ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .91$, range: 1-5). Offenders were perceived to have expressed lesser degrees of forbearance ($M = 2.48$ out of 5-point Likert scale, $SD = 1.23$, range: 1 to 4.67) and compensation ($M = 1.27$ out of 5-point Likert scale, $SD = .80$, range: 1 to 4.33) in their offers of amends. A macro-overall amends score was created by using the mean of the 4 items and a higher score indicated more elaborate offers of amends. The correlations between each of the items are presented in Table 9.

Notably, coders' macro-ratings of overall amends, remorse, responsibility, forbearance, and compensation were significantly correlated with their respective micro-ratings of specific amends behaviours (see Table 10). These correlations suggest that the coders' macro-ratings of the offenders' amends are grounded in observable amends behaviours.

Manipulation checks

Coders were instructed to rate all micro-responsiveness items in the amends videotapes, and to rate all micro-amends items in the responsiveness videotapes. Manipulation checks were conducted using the coders' micro-overall responsiveness scores (average across understanding and validation items) and the coders' micro-overall amends behaviour (sum across all remorse, responsibility, compensation and forbearance behaviours). Since all offenders recorded both an amends and responsiveness video, paired samples t-tests were used to examine the differences in mean level of responsiveness between the offenders' responsiveness and amends videos, and the differences in mean level of amends between the offenders' amends and responsiveness videos. Results indicated a significant responsiveness manipulation, in which the mean level of responsive behaviour coded in the offenders' responsiveness videos ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .66$) was significantly greater than the mean level of responsive behaviour present in their amends videos

($M = 1.86, SD = .55$); $t(63) = 8.89, p < 0.001$. A significant amends manipulation was also found, in which the mean level of amends behaviour coded in the offenders' amends videos ($M = 2.79, SD = 1.37$) was significantly greater than the mean level of amends behaviour coded in their responsiveness videos ($M = .88, SD = 1.04$); $t(63) = 12.47, p < 0.01$.

I also examined whether victims perceived greater partner amends when they were in experimental conditions in which they viewed an offer of amends (amends only, amends + responsiveness condition) compared to when they did not (responsiveness only, control condition). Results of an independent samples t -test indicated that victims who viewed an offer of amends perceived greater partner amends ($M = 5.48, SD = .21$) than those who did not ($M = 3.54, SD = .26$); $t(62) = 5.76, p < 0.001$. An independent samples t -test was also used to examine whether victims' perceived greater partner responsiveness when they were in experimental conditions in which they viewed an offer of responsiveness (responsiveness only, amends + responsiveness condition) compared to when they did not (amends only or control condition). Results indicated that victims who viewed an offer of responsiveness perceived greater partner responsiveness ($M = 6.16, SD = .21$) than those who did not ($M = 5.45, SD = .26$); $t(62) = 2.60, p < 0.01$.

Outlier Analyses

An assessment of the normality of data distribution and of outliers was conducted for all examined independent and dependant study variables. The normality of data distribution was assessed by examining skew and kurtosis. Using Finch and West's (1997) criteria for problematic skew (± 2) and kurtosis (± 7), the data for all variables was determined to be reasonably normally distributed. With the use of $p = .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis distance, no multivariate outliers were detected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Main Analyses

Does the victim's relationship satisfaction moderate the effects of the offender's offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness on the victim's forgiveness? I examined this question using multiple regression analysis. Satisfaction was mean centered and offers of amends and responsiveness were effect coded. Amends was effect coded such that victims who viewed an offer of amends (i.e. victims in the amends only condition, and victims in the amends + responsiveness condition) were compared to victims who did not view an offer of amends (i.e. victims in the responsiveness only condition, and victims in the control condition). Responsiveness was effect coded such that victims who viewed an offer of responsiveness (i.e. victims in the responsiveness only condition, and victims in the amends + responsiveness condition) were compared to victims who did not view an offer of responsiveness (i.e. victims in the amends only condition, and victims in the control condition). A product term involving amends and responsiveness was created to test for the two-way interaction.

I predicted forgiveness with relationship satisfaction, offers of amends and offers of responsiveness, the two-way interactions between each pair of these variables, and the three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness and satisfaction. I hypothesized that the victim's relationship satisfaction would moderate the effects of the offender's offers of amends and offers of responsiveness on forgiveness. Results from this analysis did not support my hypotheses (see Table 11). Specifically, only a significant main effect of relationship satisfaction was found, such that the more satisfied the victim felt with the relationship, the more forgiving he/she was [$b = 1.5, p < .01$].⁹

⁹Given that gender and relationship status were two other factors in the design of this experiment, each was examined as a potential moderator of these results in separate regression analyses. On the first step of regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by satisfaction (mean centered), offers of amends, offers of responsiveness, the two-way interactions between each pair of these variables, the three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness

Post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine whether relationship length and re-occurrence of the event (i.e. whether it was a first-time offense or not) moderated any effects.¹⁰ With regards to relationship length, on the first step of regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by satisfaction (mean centered), offers of amends, offers of responsiveness, the two-way interactions between each pair of these variables, the three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness and satisfaction, and relationship length (mean centered). On the second step of the regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by the two-way interactions between relationship length with satisfaction, amends, and responsiveness respectively, by the three-way interaction between relationship length with amends and responsiveness, and by the four-way interaction between relationship length, satisfaction, amends, and responsiveness. The same analyses were conducted substituting re-occurrence of the event (dummy coded) for relationship length. In each of these analyses, the interactions in the second step were associated with a non-significant R-squared change; therefore, results were not moderated by relationship length or whether the event has occurred previously or not. Also, neither the relationship's length nor whether the event had occurred previously predicted forgiveness or moderated the effects of amends or responsiveness on forgiveness, independent of satisfaction. Satisfaction remained the only predictor.

and satisfaction, and gender (dummy coded). On the second step of the regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by the two-way interactions between gender with amends, responsiveness and satisfaction respectively, by the three-way between gender, amends and responsiveness, and by the four-way interaction between all of these variables. The same analysis was conducted substituting gender for relationship status. In each of these analyses, the interactions in the second step were associated with a non-significant R squared change; therefore, results were not moderated by gender or relationship status. Moreover, neither variable predicted forgiveness.

¹⁰ Feedback from reviewers suggested that these two variables might impact the results of the experimental manipulation because they are important elements of the couples' history. Long-lasting couples have an extensive history of how they have discussed/avoided the particular transgression and conflict in general. Whether the transgression has occurred before or not might influence the effectiveness of receiving amends and/or responsiveness manipulation.

Post-hoc analyses were also conducted to examine whether time since the transgression moderated these results.¹¹ Each of the 6 categorical options for time (within the last week, 1-2 weeks, 3-4weeks, 1-2 months, 3-6 months, more than 6 months) were coded from 1-6 (1= within the last week to 6 = more the 6 months). Time was then treated as a continuous variable. On the first step of regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by satisfaction (mean centered), offers of amends, offers of responsiveness, the two-way interactions between each pair of these variables, the three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness and satisfaction, and time (mean centered). On the second step of the regression analysis, forgiveness was predicted by the two-way interactions between time with satisfaction, amends, and responsiveness respectively, by the three-way interaction between time, amends and responsiveness, the three-way interactions between time and satisfaction with amends and responsiveness respectively, and by the four-way interaction between these variables. The interactions in the second step were associated with a non-significant R squared change; therefore, results were not moderated by time since the transgression. Also, time did not predict forgiveness and did moderate the effects of amends or responsiveness, independent of satisfaction. Satisfaction remained the only predictor.

Does the victim's perceptions of the event's severity moderate the effects of the offender's offers of amends and expression of responsiveness on the victim's forgiveness? I tested the moderating effects of event severity using a similar regression analysis as for satisfaction. I predicted forgiveness by the main effects of event severity (mean centered), offers of amends, and offers of responsiveness, the two-way interactions between each pair of these variables, and the three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness and severity. Relationship satisfaction was entered as a covariate. Results of this analysis are found in Table 12. Results indicated a

¹¹ Feedback from one of the reviewers suggested that time since the transgression might impact the results.

significant main effect of relationship satisfaction [$b=.15, p < .01$] and a significant three-way interaction among amends, responsiveness and severity [$b=.56, p < .05$]. No other statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.¹²

A graphical representation of this interaction is displayed in Figure 1. Contrary to my predictions, results indicated that when event severity was high (at 1 *SD* above the mean of severity), there were no significant main effects of amends [$b=.03, p= .892$], responsiveness [$b=.25, p= .25$], or their interaction [$b=.22, p= .61$]. Only a significant effect of relationship satisfaction was found [$b=.15, p < .01$].

In low severity situations (at 1 *SD* below the mean of severity), results again indicated a main effect of relationship satisfaction [$b= .15, p < .01$], but, more importantly, the interaction between offers of amends and offers of responsiveness was significant [$b= -1.19, p < .01$].

Dummy codes were created and used in regression analysis to examine differences in forgiveness between each of the conditions when event severity was low (Aiken & West, 1991). First, I examined my hypothesis that, when event severity was low, victims who had received either an offer of responsiveness alone (coded 0,1,0), an offer of amends alone (coded 0,0,1), or both amends and responsiveness (1,0,0) would be more forgiving than those who received nothing (the reference group). Results confirmed my hypothesis, such that victims who received an offer of responsiveness alone were more forgiving than those in the control group [$b= .72, p < .05$], victims who received an offer of amends alone were more forgiving than those in the control group [$b= .94, p < .01$], and victims who received both an expression of

¹²Given that gender and relationship status were two other factors in the design of this experiment, each was examined as a potential moderator of these results in separate regression analyses. The same set of regression analyses to test for these moderations that had been conducted with satisfaction was conducted, substituting satisfaction with severity. Satisfaction (mean centered) was entered as a covariate. The *R*-squared changes associated with the addition of interactions with gender and relationship status were non-significant. Thus, these results were not moderated by gender or relationship status and neither variable predicted forgiveness.

responsiveness and amends were also marginally more forgiving than those in the control group [$b = .47, p = .09$]. Subsequent analyses showed that victims who received the more elaborate response of both offers of amends and responsiveness were not more forgiving than those who received an offer of amends only [$b = -.47, p = .12$] or responsiveness only [$b = -.25, p = .40$]. Also, there were no differences in forgiveness between those victims who received either an expression of amends or an expression of responsiveness [$b = .22, p = .50$]. In summary, when event severity is low, forgiveness is elicited to a similar extent if the offender offered amends, expressed responsiveness or expressed both amends and responsiveness. In particular, rather than increasing forgiveness, offering a more elaborate response involving both amends and responsiveness yielded non-significantly lower forgiveness than either alone.

I conducted post-hoc analyses to examine whether relationship length, re-occurrence of the event and time since the transgression potentially moderated the results. The same set of regression analyses that had been conducted with satisfaction was conducted, substituting satisfaction with severity. Satisfaction (mean centered) was entered as a covariate. The *R*-squared changes associated with the addition of interactions with relationship length, re-occurrence of the event and time were non-significant. Therefore, the results pertaining to severity were not moderated by any of these variables. Also, none of the variables predicted forgiveness or moderated the effects of amends or responsiveness, independent of severity.

Does perceived partner responsiveness mediate the effects of offers of amends and offers of responsiveness on forgiveness? I examined whether the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness mediated the effects of the offenders' offers of amends and offers of responsiveness on forgiveness. This mediating effect was examined when event severity was low, since it was at low event severity that offers of amends and offers of responsiveness

predicted forgiveness. Given that offers of amends and/or responsiveness (amends only, responsiveness only, amends + responsiveness) predicted greater forgiveness than the control condition, and there were no differences between any of these offers in predicting forgiveness, I constructed a dummy code variable which represented the contrast of the 3 experimental conditions versus the control condition.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria for mediation were used to test the mediating effects of perceived partner responsiveness. Two effects needed to be tested to satisfy the criteria for mediation. First, offers of amends and/or responsiveness needed to predict perceived partner responsiveness to a greater extent than the control condition. This was tested in a first regression analysis, in which I predicted the mediating variable—perceived partner responsiveness—by event severity (centered at 1 *SD* below the mean), the dummy coded variable, and the two-way interaction between severity and the dummy coded variable. As before, relationship satisfaction was included as a covariate. Second, perceived partner responsiveness needed to predict forgiveness, above and beyond the effects of offers of amends and/or responsiveness. This was tested in a second regression analysis, in which I predicted forgiveness by event severity, the dummy coded variable, perceived partner responsiveness (mean centered), the two-way interaction between severity and the dummy code, and the two-way interaction between perceived partner responsiveness and event severity. Again, satisfaction was entered as a covariate. Results from these two analyses indicated that perceived partner responsiveness did mediate the effects of offers of amends and/or responsiveness on forgiveness. First, offers of amends and/or responsiveness predicted perceived partner responsiveness to a greater extent than the control condition [$b = 2.21, p < .001$]. Second, perceived partner responsiveness predicted forgiveness [$b = .44, p < .01$] while offers of amends and/or responsiveness no longer did [$b = -$

.33, $p = .41$]. The Sobel test was used to assess the statistical significance of the indirect effects of amends and/or responsiveness on forgiveness via perceived partner responsiveness. Results indicated that perceived responsiveness significantly mediated these effects ($z = 2.765, p < .01$). The results of this mediation analyses can be found in Table 13.¹³

An alternative model in which perceived partner amends mediated the effects of offers of amends and/or responsiveness on forgiveness was examined at low levels of event severity. The same two regression analyses conducted with perceived partner responsiveness were conducted substituting perceived partner responsiveness with perceived partner amends. In the first regression equation, I predicted the mediating variable—perceived partner amends—by event severity (centred 1 *SD* below the mean), the dummy code, and the two-way interaction between severity and the dummy code variable. As before, relationship satisfaction was included as a covariate. In the second regression equation, forgiveness was predicted by event severity, the dummy code, perceived partner amends (mean centered), the two-way interaction between severity and the dummy code, and the two-way interaction between perceived partner amends and event severity. Again, satisfaction was entered as a covariate. Results from these two analyses indicated that perceived partner amends did not mediate the effects of offers of amends and/or responsiveness on forgiveness. Although offers of amends and/or responsiveness predicted perceived partner amends [$b = 2.00, p < 0.01$], perceived partner amends did not predict forgiveness [$b = .07, p = .27$]. The complete results of these analyses can be found in Table 14.

¹³Given that gender and relationship status were additional factors in the experimental design, each of these variables was tested as a moderator of the mediating effects of perceived partner responsiveness in this model. To satisfy the criteria for moderated mediation, the effects of offers of amends/and or responsiveness on perceived partner responsiveness first needed to be moderated by the moderating variable in question. Neither gender nor relationship status were found to moderate the effects of offers of amends/and or responsiveness on perceived partner responsiveness. As such, these variables did not moderate the mediating effects of perceived partner responsiveness in this model.

In summary, results indicated that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the effects of offers of amends and/or responsiveness on forgiveness at low levels of event severity. In other words, offers of amends and/or responsiveness appear to facilitate forgiveness because they communicate to the victim that their partner has understood and validated their experience of the hurtful event.

Results of my first set of analyses showed that offenders' offers of amends and/or responsiveness predicted victims' perceptions of amends and responsiveness and that it was the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness that mediated the effects of the offenders' offers on forgiveness when event severity was low. Moreover, it seemed that an offer of amends, responsiveness, or both similarly predicted forgiveness. In my second set of analyses, I examined whether variability in the offenders' offers of amends and variability in expressions of responsiveness were associated with victims' perceptions of these behaviours, and potentially to forgiveness as well.

Are victim's perceptions of partner responsiveness associated with the coders' ratings of the quality of responsive behaviour? I examined the extent to which victim's perceptions of their partner's responsiveness were associated with the partner's demonstration of responsive behaviour (i.e. expressions of understanding and validation) as rated by the coders. Analyses were conducted using the data of victims who viewed an expression of responsiveness from their partner (victims in the responsiveness only condition, and victims in the responsiveness + amends condition). Using multiple regression analysis, I began by predicting the victim's ratings of perceived partner responsiveness by the coders' macro-ratings of overall responsive behaviour (mean-centered aggregate of the macro-rated understanding and validation items). I also entered the effect code contrasting the responsiveness only and amends + responsiveness condition, and

its interaction with coders' macro-ratings (which tested whether the relation between coders' macro-ratings of overall responsiveness and victims' perceptions of responsiveness was moderated by different experimental conditions).

There were no significant effects of coders' macro-ratings of overall responsiveness with victims' perceptions. In separate regression analyses, I also examined whether the coders' macro-ratings of the subcomponents of understanding and validation predicted victims' corresponding perceptions using the same model as for overall responsiveness described above. There were no significant effects involving the coders' macro-ratings of understanding or validation. Table 15 summarizes the analyses using coders' macro-ratings.

The same set of analyses was conducted using the coders' micro-ratings of the offenders' expressed responsiveness (mean centered, aggregate score of micro-rated understanding and validation items), and the subcomponents of understanding and validation. There were no significant effects involving coders' micro-ratings of overall responsiveness or the subcomponents of understanding or validation (see Table 16).

In summary, contrary to my hypotheses, victim's perceptions of their partner's responsiveness surprisingly lacked any significant relation to the quality of specific forms of responsiveness behaviour coded by observers.¹⁴ Thus, it appears that the general act of expressing responsiveness is important, rather than any of the details of exactly how the offender expresses this. Given the absence of any significant interactions between coders' ratings and experimental condition in these analyses, the correlations between coders' ratings of the responsive behaviours and the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness are presented in Table 17.

¹⁴Event severity was examined as a potential moderator of these effects in a separate set of regression analyses and no moderating effects were found.

Are victim's perceptions of their partner's offers of amends associated with the coders' ratings of amends behaviour? Similarly, I examined the extent to which victims' perceptions of their partners' offers of amends were associated with the quality of the offenders' actual offers of amends as rated by the coders. Analyses were conducted using the data of victims who viewed an expression of amends from their partner (victims in the amends only condition, and victims in the responsiveness + amends condition). Using multiple regression analyses, I began by predicting the victim's ratings of perceived partner amends by the coders' macro-ratings of overall amends behaviour (the mean-centered aggregate score of macro-rating of remorse, responsibility, forbearance and compensation). I also entered the effect code contrasting the amends only and amends + responsiveness condition, and its interaction with coders' macro-ratings (which tested whether the relation between coders' macro-ratings of overall amends and victims' perceptions of amends was moderated by different experimental conditions).

Results from this analysis provided some support for my hypothesis (see Table 18). Coders' ratings of macro-amends and victims' perceptions of partner amends were associated such that the more offenders were rated by the coders as having offered amends, the more victims perceived their partners to have offered amends and been apologetic [$b = .96, p < 0.05$].¹⁵ The model explained a significant 37.6% of the variability in victims' ratings of perceived partner amends. Next, the coders' macro-ratings of each of the subcomponents of amends were used to predict corresponding victims' perceptions. In these analyses, only coders' macro-ratings

¹⁵ A significant two-way interaction between coders' ratings and experimental condition was found such that, in the amends only condition, coders' macro-ratings of overall amends was positively related to victims' perceptions of partner amends, whereas there was no such association in the amends + responsiveness condition. The lack of association between coders' ratings and victims' perceptions of amends in the amends +responsiveness condition is not readily interpretable given that coders' do not score macro-amends in the responsiveness videos. Given this lack of interpretability, and the fact that the direction of the association between coders' ratings and victims' perceptions in the amends alone condition was the same as in the amends + responsiveness condition, I choose to present the main effect of coders' ratings instead of the two-way interaction.

of expressions of forbearance was significantly related to the victims' perceptions of forbearance [$b = .63, p < 0.05$], and this model explained 17.5% of the variability in victims' ratings of perceived partner forbearance. No other associations between the coders' macro-ratings and victims' corresponding perceptions were found.¹⁶

The same set of regression analyses was conducted using the coders' micro-ratings of the offenders' expressions of amends (mean centered, aggregate score of micro-rated remorse, responsibility, forbearance and compensation), and each of its subcomponents. The results of these regression analyses are presented in Tables 19. There were no main effects of coders' micro-ratings for overall amends or any of its subcomponents. However, when event severity was considered as a potential moderator of these effects, two significant effects involving coders' micro-ratings were found.

One such effect involved the interaction between severity and coders' micro-ratings of overall amends [$b = -.71, p < .001$], and this model explained 57.7% of the variability in victims' ratings of perceived partner amends (see Table 20).¹⁷ A graphical representation of this interaction is displayed in Figure 2. When event severity was low (at 1 *SD* below the mean of severity), coders' micro-ratings of offenders' overall offers of amends were related to victims' perceptions such that the more offenders expressed amends, the more the victims perceived them to have offered amends and been apologetic [$b=.69, p < .01$]. However, when event severity was high (at 1 *SD* above the mean of severity), coders' micro-ratings of offenders' overall offers of

¹⁶Event Severity was examined as a potential moderator of these effects and no moderating effects were found.

¹⁷A significant three-way interaction between coders' ratings, severity and experimental condition was also found. In the amends only condition, coders' micro-ratings of overall amends was positively related to victims' perceptions of partner amends and, in high severity situations, coders' micro-ratings of overall amends was negatively related to victims' perceptions of partner amends. In the amends + responsiveness condition, these effects were amplified. The amplification of these results in the amends + responsiveness condition is not readily interpretable given that coders do not score micro amends in the responsiveness videos. Given this lack of interpretability, and the fact that the association between coders' ratings and the victims' perceptions in the three-way interaction was the same as that in the two-way interaction, I choose to present the two-way interaction between coders' ratings and severity instead.

amends were related to victims' perceptions such that the more offenders' expressed amends, the less the victims' perceived them to have offered amends and been apologetic [$b = -1.02, p < .01$].

The same interaction pattern of results emerged between coders' micro-ratings of remorse and event severity [$b = -.87, p < 0.05$], and this model explained 35.8% of the variability in victims' ratings of perceived partner remorse (see Table 21). A graphical representation of this interaction is displayed in Figure 3. When event severity was low (at 1 *SD* below the mean of severity), coders' micro-ratings of offenders' remorse were related to victims' perceptions such that the more offenders' expressed remorse, the more the victims' perceived them to have been remorseful [$b = .93, p < .05$]. However, when event severity was high (at 1 *SD* above the mean of severity), coders' micro-ratings of overall amends were related to victims' perceptions such that the more offenders' expressed amends, the less the victims' perceived them to have offered amends and been apologetic [$b = -1.15, p < .05$]. In summary, expressing more elaborate offers of amends when event severity was high, in particular expressions of remorse, appears to backfire as far as increasing the victims' perceptions that the offender was apologetic and remorseful. In low severity situations, providing more elaborate offers of amends, specifically remorse, appears to increase these perceptions.

My first set of results indicated that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the effects of amends on forgiveness while perceived partner amends did not. As such, I examined the extent to which the variability in the offenders' offers of amends, as coded by the raters, was related to the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness. In these analyses, the coders' micro-ratings of overall amends and remorse, and their macro-ratings of overall amends and forbearance were considered because these were the only ratings that emerged as significant in the above analyses.

First, I considered the coders' macro-ratings of overall amends. I used the same regression analysis to predict victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness as the one in which the effects of coders' macro-overall amends were found. As such, victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness were predicted by coders' macro-ratings of overall amends, the effect code contrasting the two experimental conditions being analysed (amends only and amends + responsiveness), and the two-way interactions between these variables. Coders' macro-ratings of overall amends were not associated with the victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness [$b = .32, p = .17$]. The same regression analysis was conducted substituting coders' macro-ratings of overall amends for macro-ratings of forbearance. No significant association between these ratings and victims' perceptions were found [$b = .01, p = .61$]. These analyses using coders' macro-ratings are summarized in Table 22.

Coders' micro-ratings of overall amends and expressions of remorse did predict victims' perceptions of responsiveness. In testing these associations, I used the same regression model in which the effects of coders' micro-overall amends in predicting victims' perceptions of amends were found. As such, victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness were predicted by coders' micro-ratings of overall amends, event severity, the effect code contrasting the two experimental conditions being analysed (amends only and amends + responsiveness), the two-way interactions between each of these variables, and the three-way interaction. Results (see Table 23) indicated that the interaction between event severity and the coders' micro-ratings of overall amends significantly predicted victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness [$b = -.28, p < .05$]. A graphical representation of this interaction is displayed in Figure 4. When event severity was low (at 1 *SD* below the mean of severity), the more offenders offered amends as rated by the coders, the more the victims perceived their partners to have been responsive [$b = .33, p < .05$].

However, when event severity was high (at 1 *SD* above the mean of severity), the offenders' offers of amends as rated by the coders did not significantly predict the victims' perceptions of partners responsiveness [$b = -.34, p = .129$].

A similar pattern of results emerged when the coders' micro-ratings of remorse were considered in predicting victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness (see Table 24). Using the same regression analysis as above, the interaction between event severity and the coders' micro-ratings of remorse was significant [$b = -.28, p < .05$]. A graphical representation of this interaction is displayed in Figure 5. When event severity was low (at 1 *SD* below the mean of severity), victims perceived their partners to have been marginally more responsive when the offender expressed more remorse as rated by the coders [$b = .54, p = .06$]. However, when event severity was high (at 1 *SD* above the mean of severity), the more the offenders expressed remorse, as rated by the coders, the less responsive the victims perceived them to be [$b = -.88, p < .05$]. In summary, it appears that when event severity is low, offering more elaborate offers of amends, in particular expression of remorse, increases the victims' perceptions that their partner understands and validates their experience of the hurtful event, which in turn, facilitates forgiveness. To the contrary, when event severity is high, offering more elaborate offers of amends, in particular expression of remorse, may have no effect at all in facilitating victims' perceptions of responsiveness or worse yet, they may backfire.

Discussion

In the current study, I experimentally tested the effects of offenders' actual offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness in predicting victims' forgiveness for real-life transgressions in romantic relationships. Based on my previous work (Pansera & La Guardia, in press), I expected certain variables—namely relationship satisfaction and event severity—to moderate these effects. However, contrary to my hypothesis, the results indicated that relationship satisfaction did not moderate the effects. It is possible that the hypothesized moderating effects were not found because of a restricted range of relationship satisfaction; the couples in our study were neither highly satisfied nor highly unsatisfied. In particular, even those individuals whose satisfaction was characterized as “low” reported moderate satisfaction ($M = 3.51$). Further examination of these effects is warranted given the influence of satisfaction in shaping partners' perceptions of each other's behaviour such as in the case of positive and negative sentiment override (Weiss, 1980; Notarius, Benson, Sloane, Vanzetti, Horryak, 1989) and of forgiveness in general. Testing such a model with samples of clinically distressed and non-distressed couples may provide clearer evidence for the moderating effects of satisfaction.

Results of this study did provide evidence for the moderating effects of event severity, but not in the pattern I had hypothesized. For less severe events, offering amends, expressing responsiveness, or expressing both yielded more forgiveness than providing no response at all. Analyses also suggested that any of these responses elicited forgiveness to a similar degree. These findings provide initial empirical data that supports the utility of directly expressing responsiveness to promote forgiveness, and they provide further evidence for a growing literature showing that partner's offers of amends promote forgiveness for real-life transgressions (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a; Bono et al., 2008; Hannon et al., 2010).

The finding that the combination of amends and responsiveness did not elicit more forgiveness than either component alone raises an interesting question: Are the constructs of amends and responsiveness sufficiently distinct that the experimental manipulations for each were not simply having the same underlying impact on forgiveness? Conceptually, it is possible for some degree of overlap to exist between offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness. Offers of amends function to repair relational ruptures, and could in themselves communicate care for the partner as well as validation for their experience of the hurtful event (i.e. through acknowledgment of the offender's role impact of the offender actions on the victim). Indeed, in both my previous work (Pansera & La Guardia, in press) and this thesis, I hypothesized that offers of amends may facilitate forgiveness, at least in part, because they may communicate responsiveness to the victim. As I have argued elsewhere (Pansera & La Guardia, in press), there are good theoretical and empirical reasons to support the idea that amends and partner responsiveness are indeed distinguishable constructs and merit examination as such. First, offering amends does not necessarily communicate to the victim, or imply, that the offender actually understands the reasons for why the victim is hurt. In support of the distinction, research in the social support literature finds that even the most well-intentioned and sincere offers of support can be perceived as unresponsive or unsupportive if they do not reflect an accurate understanding of the recipient's problem and needs, and provide the kind of support desired by the recipient (Cutrona, 1996). Likewise, expressing an accurate understanding of the victim's hurt, legitimizing his or her point of view, and caring about his or her hurt is not equivalent to expressing that one admits wrong-doing and needs to "make-up" for this wrong-doing. Indeed, in the current study, results of an independent samples *t*-test indicated that victims who viewed an offer of amends only perceived greater partner amends ($M = 5.68, SD = 1.45$) than those who

viewed an expression of responsiveness only ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.10$); $t(31) = 3.57$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, there is other empirical evidence that these constructs are viewed as distinguishable by the victims. In the current study, there was only a small correlation between victims' ratings of the offenders' amends and responsiveness ($r = .36$). In both my previous work (Pansera & La Guardia, in press) and the current study, when the amends and responsiveness items were submitted to a principal components analysis, two eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged, thus suggesting the presence of two separate constructs. Individual items from each measure loaded strongly on their respective factors with no significant overlap. In the future, the unique and combined effects of amends and responsiveness should continue to be investigated using designs discussed below.

Contrary to my hypotheses, offering amends and/or expressing responsiveness did not affect forgiveness when event severity was high. The results obtained in the current study run contrary to the idea that the effects of offering amends and responsiveness might be more pronounced for more severe events, which elicit a greater need for reparative and conciliatory action as opposed to less severe events in which there is relatively little negative impact incurred (Day & Ross, 2010; Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). They are also somewhat discrepant from those that would have been expected based on my previous work (Pansera & La Guardia, in press); in that work, I found that offering amends directly predicted forgiveness at high, but not low event severity, and that partner responsiveness uniquely predicted forgiveness and that this effect was not moderated by event severity. It is possible that differences in design between these studies led to the differences in the pattern of moderations found. In the current study, I examined the effects of actual demonstrations of offender amends and responsiveness on forgiveness as opposed to the victims' recollections and reports of their partner's amends and responsiveness.

The ineffectiveness of amends and responsiveness when event severity is high is, however, consistent with the alternative idea that the level of distress and negative motivational states incurred by more severe events make it more difficult for conciliatory gestures to facilitate conflict resolution and forgiveness (Schonbach, 1990; Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003). Indeed, some research suggests that the extent to which offers of amends decrease victims' negative emotions and other motivational states is significantly attenuated when event severity is high (Obhuchi et al., 1989), and such offers can be rejected altogether (Bennett & Earwaker, 1994). Additionally, these results are consistent with research that has shown the ineffectiveness of amends on forgiveness when attributions of responsibility and intent are high (Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama, & Shirvani, 2008)— factors that tend to be associated with event severity. Events that are perceived by the victim to be more severe are also perceived to have been more controllable and intentional (e.g., Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Fincham et al., 2005; Friesen et al., 2005; McCullough et al., 2012; Pansera & La Guardia, in press; Struthers, Eaton, Mendoza, Santelli, & Shirvani, 2010). In the current study, such an association was also found (responsibility attributions: $r = .40, p < 0.01$). As such, when event severity is high, expressing that one understands and validates his or her partner's hurt and attempting to make amends may simply fall on "deaf ears." The motivation to forgive may rely on factors that extend beyond the offender's post-transgression behaviour, such as the victim's relationship satisfaction. Indeed, research shows that relationship satisfaction is an important resource that facilitates forgiveness in the wake of hurtful events, and in the current study, it predicted forgiveness for events across the spectrum of severity. Further research will need to be conducted to examine the moderating effects of event severity on the effects of amends and responsiveness within the specific context of romantic relationships. This remains an area in need of future research given that feelings of

hurt and distress can be more pronounced within the context of romantic relationships (Leary et al., 1998) and that distress within close relationships significantly impacts individual well-being and relationship outcomes (Reis & Collins, 2004).

In support of my hypothesis, results of this study showed that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the effects of offering amends and expressing responsiveness on forgiveness for low severity events, even above and beyond the effects of relationship satisfaction. That is, actual offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness may facilitate forgiveness because they communicate that the offender has understood and validated the partner's experience of the hurtful event. These results lend further support to initial work indicating that perceived partner responsiveness mediated the amends-responsiveness link (Pansera & La Guardia, in press), but extend this work by demonstrating these mediating effects following actual demonstrations of partner amends as well as direct expressions of understanding and validation. Prior theory and research have indicated that perceived partner responsiveness is a key construct that accounts for the salutatory positive effects of a variety of partner behaviours on couples' relationship functioning (e.g., Cutrona, 1996; Laurenceau et al., 1998; Laurenceau et al., 2001). The results in the current study extend this work by demonstrating that perceived partner responsiveness also mediates the positive effects of partners' actual offers of amends and direct expressions of understanding and validation on forgiveness.

Another goal of this study was to examine the extent to which victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness and partner amends were associated with the offenders' behaviours during the observed interaction. Consistent with past research (see Lemay & Clark, 2008, for a review), I too found some evidence that perceptions of partner responsiveness were grounded in offenders' expressions of responsive behaviour during the observed interaction. Indeed, victims

perceived greater partner responsiveness when they viewed offenders expressed understanding and validation compared to when they did not. However, contrary to my predictions, coders' macro-and micro-ratings of the offenders' responsive behaviour did not predict the victims' perceptions of responsiveness. The lack of associations found in this study is consistent with recent research in which weak, non-significant associations were found between coders' global and micro-ratings of responsive behaviour and participants' perceptions of responsiveness (Maisel et al., 2008). The fact that no associations were found, however, is perhaps still somewhat surprising given that a number of studies have demonstrated some association between coders' and participant ratings, in specific interactions, of responsiveness (Lemay & Clark, 2008) or constructs related to responsiveness (e.g., social support: Collins & Feeney, 2000; Cutrona, Hessling, & Suhr, 1997).

The lack of association in this study between victims' perceptions of responsiveness and the coders' ratings of responsive behaviour provides support for the idea that perceptions of partners' responsiveness can be largely self-construed, and that perception is the critical variable (Lemay & Clark, 2008; Reis et al., 2004). Differences in mood (e.g. depression), personality (e.g., self-esteem, rejection sensitivity), attachment security, and general feelings of relationship happiness or distress may act as "perceptual filters" influencing the detection and interpretation of a partner's responsive behaviour during interaction (Reis et al., 2004). Also, as I alluded to earlier and will further discuss, the couple's interaction history is likely to have been an important "filter" of the offender's behaviour during the lab interaction. This history may refer to the offender's prior communications about the specific incident (e.g., what the offender and victim have said about their respective roles in the incident) or to the offender's general conflict-resolution and communication tendencies (e.g., does the offender typically voice understanding

or acknowledge responsibility during conflict). Such “filtering” may explain why the associations between coders’ ratings of responsive behaviour and partner’s perceptions can be weak and sometimes difficult to detect at all. In this study, I examined event severity as one “filter” of responsive behaviour, because event severity is important to forgiveness and was shown to moderate the effects of the general act of expressing responsiveness in this study. However, no moderations were found. One filter that future research might examine is the victims’ perceptions of their own responsiveness towards their partner. In a series of studies, Lemay and colleagues (2007, 2008) argued that, in the face of ambiguity, people will project their own feelings of responsiveness onto their partner, and it is this projection that fundamentally drives relationship maintenance and growth. The effects of the victims’ perceptions of their own responsiveness could be examined in relation to how the offenders’ offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness are perceived, as well as how they impact, or are impacted by, forgiveness for relationship hurts.

It is interesting that victims seemingly attended to the general act of expressing responsiveness as opposed to any of the details of how the partner went about doing this. Victims’ attention to the general form may possibly be due to the victim perceiving ambiguity in the offenders’ expression of responsiveness. The social support literature suggests that providing a mixture of responsive and unresponsive behaviour to one’s partner during an interaction can create ambiguity (Collins & Feeney, 2004, Feeney & Collins, 2003), and so can inconsistencies in the way partners express responsiveness across time and different situations (Lemay & Clark, 2008). Although the current study was designed to elicit responsive (versus unresponsive) content, demonstrations of “unresponsive” behaviour (e.g., defensiveness) were not specifically taken account in these analyses, and it is possible that the offenders’ prior communications about

the event were somewhat discrepant with their communications during the study. In the face of such ambiguity, partners might side-step uncertainty that arises by turning their attention away from the specifics of their partner's actual behaviour, thereby decreasing their detection of responsive behaviour (Lemay & Clarke, 2008).

I found some evidence in support of my hypotheses for the associations between victims' perceptions of partner amends and coder-rated amends behaviour. First, significant associations were found between the coders' macro-ratings of overall amends and forbearance, respectively with the victims' ratings (i.e., aggregated amends composite, specific forbearance rating). The more victims' perceived their partner to have offered amends overall, the more offenders were rated to have offered amends, and the more victims' perceived their partner to have offered forbearance overall, the more offenders were rated to have offered forbearance. Second, significant associations were also found between the coders' micro-ratings of overall amends and remorse with the victims' ratings (i.e. aggregated amends composite, specific remorse rating, respectively), but only when event severity was considered as a moderator of these effects. When event severity was low, the more offenders expressed amends overall (sum of all amends behaviours), and remorse in particular, the more victims' perceived the offender to have offered amends and been remorseful. However, when event severity was high, the more offenders expressed amends overall, and remorse in particular, the less the victims' perceived them to have offered amends and been remorseful. The fact that few of the coder rated amends subcomponents predicted corresponding victims' ratings, but that the coders' aggregate ratings of overall amends predicted victims' corresponding aggregate ratings, suggests that victims may have been inferring the presence of amends subcomponents. These results are consistent with research in non-romantic contexts which shows that, when given hypothetical scenarios, people can

misperceive the presence or absence of amends components and can infer the presence of some based on others (Schmitt et al., 2004). It extends this research by demonstrating that these processes operate when actual offers of amends for real-life transgressions are considered.

Coders' macro- and micro-ratings of amends predicted victim's perceptions of amends differently. Observational research of marital interactions has also found discrepancies in patterns of results and outcomes predicted by macro- and micro-ratings of theoretically similar phenomena within the same interaction situation (e.g., Julien, Markman, & Lindahl, 1989; Floyd, O'Farrell, & Goldberg, 1987). Such differences may be accounted for by differences in the systems' coding units and level of inference required in making ratings (Floyd, 1989), and these differences could account for the different pattern of results emerging from the macro and micro-amends coding systems in the current study. Notably, it has been argued that micro-assessments of behaviour appear to be more sensitive to how situational factors may influence behaviour, and are particularly useful in advancing knowledge in areas that are relatively new (Floyd, 1989). In as much as event severity is a situational factor, and empirical research on the influence of the specific content of amends is fairly limited (see Scher & Darley, 1998, Fehr & Gefland, 2010; Schmitt et al., 2004; and Zechmeister et al., 2004, for exceptions in non-romantic contexts), the results emerging from the micro-coding scheme are particularly useful and further interpreted below.

When event severity was low, providing more elaborate offers of amends, particularly remorse, was associated with greater victim's perceptions that the partner was remorseful and apologetic. More importantly, it was associated with greater victims' perceptions of the offenders' responsiveness, which in turn, facilitated forgiveness. However, when event severity was high, offering more elaborate amends, in particular expressing greater remorse backfired in

that the offender appeared less remorseful, and less apologetic overall. More importantly, more elaborate offers of amends did not elicit perceived partner responsiveness at all, and expressing more remorse decreased perceived partner responsiveness, which in turn, decreased forgiveness. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that more elaborate offers of amends predict greater forgiveness (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006a; Bono et al., 2008; Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Hannon et al., 2010; Kelley, 1998; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough et al., 1997; Scher & Darley, 1997). However, the results extend this research by suggesting that “saying more is not always better,” and, sometimes, it can make things worse. They also provide support to the idea that expressions of remorse and empathy may be particularly salient and influential when it comes to forgiveness within close relationships (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010).

The moderating effects of event severity on the associations between coder-rated offender amends and victims’ perceptions of amends and responsiveness extend the results previously discussed whereby expressing amends facilitated victims’ forgiveness at low, but not high, event severity, and that perceived partner responsiveness mediated this effect. When event severity is low, and the hurt incurred is not significant, expressing more remorse and more elaborate amends overall may be readily accepted and perceived as apologetic and responsive. However, for high severity events, which elicit greater emotional distress and are perceived as more controllable by the victim, more elaborate expressions of remorse and amends overall are perhaps construed as manipulative or insincere, thus leading the victim to perceive their partner as less apologetic and remorseful, and “unresponsive.” Overall, the results obtained here contribute to a growing literature which suggests that the content of amends in itself does matter, and the effectiveness of amends can be influenced by the fit between content and context (Fehr

& Gelfand, 2010). It extends the research by suggesting that, at least within romantic relationships, event severity may be one such important contextual factor.

Limitations and Future Directions

The lab-based, experimental design of this study allowed me to examine the causal effects of offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness on forgiveness in romantic relationships. Although this design has its strengths, it has several limitations.

First, the experimental design poses limits on the ecological validity and the generalizability of the results. Specifically, the couples in this study did not directly interact, and offenders were prompted to express amends and responsiveness. As such, the natural process through which offers of amends and responsiveness are elicited was not examined, and how they are actually expressed during couples' interactions may not have been fully captured. However, research suggests that couples' communication and support interactions within lab contexts are representative of their typical manner of behaving at home (see Heyman, 2001, for a review). Additionally, several steps were taken to maximize ecological validity while maintaining the integrity of the experiment; in particular, partners were asked to discuss and respond to a real-life transgression and the semi-structured interview allowed the participant to generate their own content to the general, required responses (descriptions of the hurt, offers of amends and responsiveness). Nonetheless, it is possible that partners may have provided atypical responses because of the study's demands and these responses may have been perceived as somewhat artificial by each other. Should a similar experimental design be employed in the future, it might be useful to obtain ratings of the degree to which the partners perceived each other's response to be typical and/or expected. Expectations about how a partner will behave—whether it be making amends or expressing responsiveness—are likely to shape one's perceptions of the partner's

behaviour when it does occur (Reis, 2004). Examining the relationship between the partner's expectations and the other's actual behaviour may shed further light on the relationship between coder ratings and victim's perceptions, as well as what behaviours will be perceived as reparative and responsive and facilitate forgiveness.

In this study, I assessed the effects of offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness for a hurtful event that had already transpired within the couple, and I observed these effects at a single point in time. The design of this study does not assess the process through which offers of amends and expressions of responsiveness are elicited or the temporal effects of these responses on perceived partner responsiveness and forgiveness. For example, the extent to which one partner takes ownership of his or her emotional experiences (e.g., the victim), and openly and clearly expresses these feelings and needs without launching verbal insults may influence the other partner's post-transgression behaviour (Greenberg, Warwar, & Malcom, 2010). Also, recent research suggests that the timing of an offer of amends may influence its effectiveness—expressing amends too early may communicate a lack of understanding about the hurt incurred (Frantz & Benningson, 2005) and expressing them too late may render them altogether ineffective (Zilzer & Franz, 2002). In the current study, time elapsed since the transgression was not found to moderate the effects of amends and responsiveness on forgiveness, or the effects of satisfaction and severity on the experimental manipulation. However, it is possible that participants' memory of the event now (e.g., when it occurred, its severity) may have been influenced by interactions with their partner post-conflict or by their current level of relationship satisfaction. For example, victims who were highly satisfied with their relationship at the time of the study may have provided more benign reports of the event's severity now than when it actually occurred. I took measures to reduce the effects of such biases: the detailed interview

with the victims activated thoughts and feelings related to the specific event, and I asked participants to rate their overall relationship satisfaction in session 1. Nonetheless, there is likely still some bias associated with obtaining retrospective reports of the event after it has already transpired. As such, longitudinal, daily diary studies in which the partners are asked to complete records of relationship functioning, perceptions of the event hurtful event, and reports of self and partner behaviours soon after a transgression could provide a stronger test of the temporal effects of amends and responsiveness on forgiveness, as well as of the moderators and mediators here explored.

In the current study, the victims' and coders' ratings of the offenders' behaviour were obtained and compared. There is great utility to obtaining coders' ratings of couples' interactions. Obtaining both partner and coder ratings of behaviour helps to shed light onto the relation between partners' perceptions, each other's behaviour and the role of "filters" previously discussed. Notwithstanding any biases inherent in coders' ratings (e.g., coders' personal relationship experiences, comparisons between couples in a sample), the acquisition and comparison of coder and partner ratings has produced reliable and valid data which has contributed substantially to the development of theory and clinical intervention for couples (e.g., patterns of demand-withdrawal; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Sargestano, Christensen & Heavey, 1998; conflict-escalating communication; Gottman & Levenson, 1992; sentiment override and editing; Notarius et al., 1989; maladaptive attributions; Bradbury & Fincham, 1992; negative expectations, Vanzetti, Notarius & NeeSmith, 1992). In future work, the offenders' perceptions of their own offers of amends and responsiveness could also be assessed, as it is likely that divergence exists between these perceptions and those of the victim. Indeed, partners have been shown to diverge in their perceptions of the transgression (e.g., event severity,

respective level of personal and partner responsibility; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) and perceptions of expressed and perceived responsiveness (Lemay et., al. 2007; Lemay & Clarke, 2008). Examining the congruency and divergence between partners' perceptions of amends and responsiveness would further contribute to our understanding of how forgiveness occurs. For example, forgiveness may be stymied between partners who diverge in their perceptions of having taken on the other's perspective and apologized. If the victim believes that this apology has not been expressed, he or she might continue to harbor negative feelings towards the offender and remain distant. On the other hand, the offender may keep his or her own distance if he or she perceives the offers of reparation have been rejected. Conversely, some divergences between victim and partner perspectives may expedite forgiveness. For instance, a victim who perceives the offender to have expressed understanding and taken responsibility—even when the offender does not endorse this as actually having happened—may show a renewed desire for closeness to the offender. In turn, the offender may engage in reparative attempts that would facilitate further forgiveness. Use of a quasi-signal detection paradigm (Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003) to study the outcomes of this convergence and divergence could be used in context of longitudinal daily diary design or lab-based study.

A number of limitations related to the coding scheme are noteworthy. First, the modest sample size of our study, time constraints and financial limitations made it difficult to use standard procedures of analyzing inter-rater reliability during the pilot phase of the project and throughout. There were videos of 10 couples that were coded in the pilot phase, and only 32 were available half way through running the study. At either of these points, it was difficult to assess the possibility of coder-drift with precision and whether low inter-rater reliabilities on some items were due to coders' divergent interpretations of the items or sampling error due to a

small sample size. However, procedures were undertaken to track coders-drift and inter-rater reliability throughout the study. After having coded assigned videos (approximately 10 at a time), meetings with the coders were held to discuss the specific items in which there was significant discrepancy between ratings. The second limitation is that the same coders provided both micro and macro ratings of amends and responsiveness. Although the coders were not explicitly aware of the correspondence between the micro and macro items, it is possible that to some extent the high correlations between these ratings represent the coders' efforts to be consistent. In the future, hiring different coders to complete the micro-versus macro-coding could provide a stronger comparison of the predictive value of these systems. In the future, it could also be interesting to obtain partner ratings of the micro-items to examine whether participants' observations of the micro-behaviours map onto their global perceptions. Qualitative descriptions from participants about what they found to be effective (and ineffective) amends and responsive behaviours could shed further light on the idiosyncrasies of couples' ways of expressing amends and responsiveness.

Unfortunately, the items that were created to code for expressions of care in the offenders' responsiveness videos showed poor inter-rater reliability and were thus dropped from all subsequent analyses. Relative to understanding and validation, care has received less empirical and theoretical attention in the realm of expressed and perceived responsiveness (Reis & Patrick, 1996), making it unfortunate that I was not able to examine its contributions in the current study. Some research suggests that care may be somewhat more difficult to rate than understanding and validation, documenting the inter-rater reliability of the former component at about the .6 level and those of the former at .8 and above (Maisel et al., 2008). It is possible that that the semi-structured interview format did less well at eliciting offenders' verbal and non-

verbal disclosures of care and concern than a situation in which partners were interacting. Nonetheless, I found moderate correlations between the omitted care items and the understanding and validation subcomponents, as well as with the overall responsiveness composite. This provides some reassurance that, to some degree, the essence of care was captured through these items, and so was the breadth of the responsiveness construct.

This study focused on examining the impact of verbal and direct expressions of amends and responsiveness on forgiveness to the relative exclusion of indirect, non-verbal and action-based expressions. Research on forgiveness-communication (Kelley, 1998; Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Waldron & Kelley, 2005), relational repair (e.g., Dindia & Baxter, 1987; Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982), uncertainty reduction strategies (e.g., Emmers-Sommer & Canary, 1996), and conflict management (e.g., Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994) suggests that expressions of amends and responsiveness may vary across verbal and non-verbal and direct-indirect dimensions. The data collected in the current study suggest that, for high severity situations, talk is “cheap;” perhaps repeated, action-based offers of amends and responsiveness during post-transgression interactions are needed to repair broken bonds and provide reassurance of trustworthiness. Additionally, some research has shown that in some collectivistic cultures, the process of reparation and forgiveness includes the involvement of individuals outside of the victim-offender dyad (e.g., family and/or community members), and places an emphasis on ritual and indirect communication (Sandage, Hill, & Vandage, 2003). As such, there may be cultural differences in the ways amends and responsiveness are expressed and the extent to which different expressions (e.g., verbal and non-verbal, direct and indirect, private and public) would be perceived as sincerely reparative and responsive, and facilitate forgiveness. I have begun to explore these issues with the creation of the Forgiveness Seeking Inventory—a 67-item measure

which assesses verbal-direct, verbal-indirect, non-verbal/actions, other inclusive expressions of amends and responsiveness. Such a measure could be used in cross-cultural designs.

Conclusions

This thesis presents evidence for the causal effects of the general act of expressing amends and responsiveness on facilitating forgiveness for real-life transgressions in romantic relationships, and also suggests that the content of offenders' amends matters. Importantly, there is also evidence that event severity exerts boundaries on these facilitating effects, and that one partner's attempts to make amends and express responsiveness may not be detected, or positively, construed. As noted in the literature, there are few studies to date that examine such boundary conditions (e.g., Struthers et al., 2008), and which simultaneously assess outsider expressions of offender behaviour and victims' perceptions. The current work supports the importance of such research in the forgiveness literature; indeed, the offender's enactment of conciliatory behaviour impacts not only the victim, but the offender and the overall relationship functioning as well. For example, although expressing amends and responsiveness may sometimes not elicit any more, or any less, forgiveness from the victim, such expressions may be associated with certain benefits or costs for the offender (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007).

Hurtful events are inevitable in romantic partnerships, however, successful resolution of such experiences can strengthen relationship bonds, increase couples' resiliency in the face of future relationship distress, and promote individual well-being. Identifying the extent to which partner amends and expressions of responsiveness influence forgiveness, and under which conditions, can contribute to interventions helping couples respond to these inevitable hurts and strengthen their bond.

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Appendix A: Instructions for Recollection of Hurtful Event

Most couples experience conflict during the course of their relationship. At one time or another, individuals will all experience negative feelings and thoughts because of something their partner said or did.

Please think about an event in which your partner's attitudes, actions or words were hurtful to you. The event should have occurred anytime **within the last year**, should be **specific**, and **currently unresolved** for you—that is, you are still experiencing lingering negative feelings and thoughts as a consequence of this event and your partner's actions. Sometimes it may take a few minutes to think of an incident. The hurtful event could include the following and should be similar in “tone” to the following examples:

- He/she criticized me inappropriately or unfairly.
- He/she did not fulfill a responsibility that was important to me
- He/she did something that embarrassed me
- He/she forgot a significant event
- He/she was insensitive towards me
- He/she did not fulfill a promise they made me
- He/she did not support me when I needed them
- He/she did not share something of importance with me
- He/she was not attentive to my feelings and/or concerns
- Other

Once you have a **recent, unresolved** event in mind take a few minutes to think about the details and circumstances of the incident. When and where did it occur? Who was present? What did you say and do? What did your partner say and do?

On the next page you will be asked to write a **brief** description of the event so that your partner can identify the incident to which you are referring. Please indicate **when** and **where** the event took place, **who** was present during the time of the event and a **1-2 sentence** description explaining what happened. **Do not** write any substantive details about the event here. Simply write a brief but clear description that would allow for recognition of the event by your partner.

Description of event:

When the event took place:

Where the event took place:

Who was present during the event:

What happened? (1-2 sentence description)

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview with Victim

Questions 1: Today you have chosen to discuss the time when you and your partner.....
Tell me about some of the details regarding this incident. What happened exactly?

Questions 2: Let's talk about the history leading up to this event. Have there been any past incidents/conflicts that may have occurred that would make this particular event negative for you or is the negativity simply related to other factors?

Questions 3: How did this event make you feel personally and towards your partner? How did it make you feel about your relationship? (In a nutshell, WHY was this event hurtful?)

Appendix C: Offender Semi-Structured Interview

Part 1.

You have just had the opportunity to view your partner's account of the incident and to hear about their feelings and thoughts regarding the event. We would now like to give you the opportunity to do the same. What is your experience or your perspective of the situation?

Part 2—Responsiveness.

- 1) Please tell me how you understand your partner's experience of the event as they described it on the videotape. What were the feelings and thoughts they experienced as a consequence of this event and that they expressed in their account?
- 2) Take a moment and take on your partner's perspective of this event. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine their experience. Think about *what* they might have been feeling and thinking and *why* they might have been thinking and feeling that way....

Now, taking on your partners' perspective, talk to me about what they would have been thinking and feeling for this event and why.

Part 3—Offers of Amends.

Often times when couples have an interaction where one or both members feel hurt or angry, they eventually try to reconnect with their partner or to set things right.

Often times, people will try to "reconnect" with their partner or try to begin to make things right between themselves and their partner by doing one or more of the following things:

- express an apology,
- express remorse/regret,
- accept responsibility of their part
- say how they would do things differently in the future
- make an offer to do something special for their partner

What would you say to your partner to reconnect with them around the specific event discussed today?

Pretend that your partner can see and hear you right now through this camera.

Please talk directly to your partner through the camera in an effort to reconnect with them around the specific event discussed today.

Appendix D: The BICAR

Most couples experience conflict during the course of their relationship, and at one time or another, individuals will all experience negative thoughts and emotions because of something their partner said or did. Typically, after a conflict, you will have many different thoughts and feelings about the event and about your partner. The intensity of these thoughts and feelings may vary, with some thoughts and feelings emerging much more strongly while others fade away.

What follows is a list of thoughts and feelings that are common in individuals who have been hurt by their partner's attitudes, words, and/or actions. Below, please rate the extent to which these commonly held thoughts and feelings reflect your experience of this event **RIGHT NOW**. Take special note of the end points on each scale.

Right now, when you think about this negative event with your partner...

1. To what extent do you feel disappointed in your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her

2. To what extent is it difficult for you to think favorably about your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most it has ever been

3. To what extent do you feel distant from your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her

4. To what extent do you feel angry towards your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her

5. To what extent is it easy for you to feel warm towards your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most it has ever been

6. To what extent do you feel resentful towards your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her

7. To what extent is it easy for you to see your partner and his/her qualities positively?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the easiest it has ever been

8. To what extent do you feel accepting of your partner's weaknesses and shortcomings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most accepting I have ever been

9. To what extent would you like your partner to feel regret for this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most he/she could possibly feel

10. To what extent to you feel a strong and deep connection to your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt

11. To what extent do you feel strong loving feelings towards your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt

12. To what extent would you like your partner to feel guilty for this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most he/she could possibly feel

13. To what extent would you like your partner to feel as bad as you felt during and after the incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

14. To what extent would you like your partner to experience some, if not all, of the negative emotions you felt during and after the incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

15. To what extent do you think your partner should do something nice for you to help clear up the negative emotions they caused you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

16. To what extent would you like your partner to make up in some way for the negative feelings this incident brought up in you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

For the following questions, please compare how you have felt after this conflict to other times when you have had a conflict with your partner. Please pay special attention to the end points of each rating scale.

Compared to most other times after you have had a conflict with your partner, RIGHT NOW...

17. To what extent do you want some distance between you and your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

18. To what extent would you feel enthusiastic about accepting your partner's proposal to engaging in a joint activity?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her after a conflict

19. To what extent do you feel enthusiastic to participate in an activity that you and your partner usually do together?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her after a conflict

20. To what extent do you feel open to express concern or interest in your partner's thoughts and feelings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most I have ever felt with him/her after a conflict

21. To what extent do you feel open to express your own thoughts and feelings with your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the most possible

22. To what extent would you like to give your partner the cold shoulder?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

23. To what extent would you like to participate in an activity that your partner enjoys?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

24. To what extent would you rather do an activity separate from your partner than with your partner?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

25. To what extent might you hesitate to ask your partner for assistance because of this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

26. To what extent might you prefer to seek assistance from someone else (e.g. friend, other family member) rather than your partner if you needed assistance?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

27. If your partner requested assistance for something that they could really do on their own, to what extent might you hesitate to help them out?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

28. To what extent would try to make up an excuse for not being able to assist your partner with something if they needed help?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

29. To what extent would you go out of your way to spend quality time with your partner if either of you had free time?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

30. To what extent might you refrain from asking your partner to join in on some event or activity that you would normally ask them to join?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

31. To what extent is it easy for you right now to move beyond the discomfort your partner has caused you from this event?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the easiest it has ever been

32. To what extent do you feel that your partner must do or say something before you can truly let bygones be bygones concerning this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

33. To what extent is it easy for you to “absorb” and accept your negative feelings that have been brought out during this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	the easiest it has ever been

34. To what extent are you able to let go of the negative feelings your partner has caused you in this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	definitely

35. To what extent have you resolved this incident within yourself?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	completely

Right now, when you think about this negative event with your partner...

36. To what extent are you personally “finished” with this event?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	completely

37. To what extent can you put this incident behind you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	completely

38. To what extent do you forgive your partner for this incident?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all	Hardly	a little bit	somewhat	quite abit	very much	completely

Note: Retained BARIC items: Benevolence: 5,7,8,10,11; Avoidance: 22,24,25,26,27,28,30; Retribution:9,12,13,14,15,16; Inner Resolution: 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38; Conciliation: 18,19, 20, 21, 23

Table 1

Inter-correlations between Subscales of Forgiveness Measure

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Avoidance		.44**	-.44***	-.34***	-.48***
2. Retribution		---	-.39***	-.49***	-.15
3. Benevolence			---	.34***	.39***
4. Inner Resolution				---	.40***
5. Conciliation					---

Note: ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Inter-rater Reliability of Micro-Responsiveness Coding Items

<u>Understanding</u>	Cronbach's α
1. <i>Voicing and openness to understanding</i> : Person shows openness to "getting in the partner's shoes" and to considering the partner's perspective and emotional experiences (e.g. "I imagine that he/she was feeling...", "I understand that they were feeling..."; "I know what he is feeling when he says...", "He/she was probably thinking...", Partner B "takes on" Partner A's voice)	.42
2. <i>Summarizing/Paraphrasing</i> : Person accurately summarizes or paraphrases the key feelings, thoughts, and needs expressed by his/her partner ("gets the facts straight")	.69
3. <i>Understanding and elaborating meaning</i> : Person communicates an understanding of "why" the event was hurtful or significant for the partner by putting his/her partner's thoughts and feelings into context (e.g. Partner B elaborates on, or connects Partner A's emotional experience of the hurtful event to "the history" of the event as discussed by Partner A)	.70
<u>Validation</u>	
4. <i>Normalizing</i> : Person recognizes that the partner's response to the event was reasonable in terms of it being a common or universal experience (e.g. "Doing X is upsetting, and I would have felt the same way if I were him;" "I think most people would feel stressed out by that kind of situation")	.68
5. <i>Legitimizing experience</i> : Person recognizes that the event <u>is meaningful</u> and that his/her partner's responses to the event <u>make sense</u> in terms of personal, relationship or environmental antecedents (e.g., "It makes sense that he would be frustrated with me because we have talked about this before, and yet I did it again...", "I can see why it makes her feel uncomfortable when I drink—her father was an abusive alcoholic"; "She said people had been so demanding of her at work that day and she felt drained, so it makes sense that she felt really let down when I did that")	.79
6. <i>Voicing support/respect/agreement</i> : Person expresses support, respect, or agreement with the partner's interpretation or reactions to the event (e.g. "Yes, she is right...this event does come up a lot," "He said it is part of my personality and I know that," "I think he had every right to feel that way...", "I respect that she did not want to have anything to do with me at the time. Why would she when I embarrassed her?" "I accept that she felt angry with me...")	.52

Caring

7. *Expressions of concern/compassion*: Person talks with warmth, empathy, compassion and/or interest about his/her partner and how his/her partner is feeling .53
8. *Expressions of love/affection*: Person expresses or appears to have genuine love and affection for his/her partner and cares that this event is affecting his/her partner and their relationship .49
-

Table 3

Pearson Correlations between Retained Micro-Responsiveness Coding Items

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Summarizing/Paraphrasing		.66**	.57**	.15
2. Understanding/Elaborating Meaning		---	.84**	.16
3. Legitimizing Experience			---	-.15
4. Normalizing				---

*Note: ** $p < .01$.*

Table 4

Pearson Correlations between Micro-Responsiveness Composite and Eliminated Items

<u>Eliminated Item</u>	
Voicing and openness to understanding	.35**
Voicing support/respect	.65**
Expressions of compassion/care	.50**
Expressions of love and affection	.56**

Note: ** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations between Coders' Macro-Ratings and Micro-Ratings of Understanding, Validation and Overall Responsiveness Composite

Understanding	.80**
Validation	.66**
Responsiveness composite	.81**

*Note: ** $p < .01$.*

Table 6

Inter-rater Reliability of Micro-Amends Coding Items

<u>Remorse</u>	Cronbach's α
1. <i>Explicit apology</i> : Offers an explicit apology (e.g., "I am sorry;" "I apologize")	.95
2. <i>Verbal expression of remorse</i> : Verbally communicates sadness, guilt, shame, or remorse about the event (e.g., "I feel badly that this happened"; "I can't believe that I did what I did;" "I'm embarrassed about this")	.84
3. <i>Self-critical</i> : Critical of own actions (e.g., "I was stupid for doing that")	.74
4. <i>Non-verbal remorse</i> : Shows non-verbal signs of feeling bad [e.g., becomes tearful or cries, has look of concern]	.59
5. <i>Verbal expression of regret</i> : Reflects on what he/she should have done during/after the event	.73
<u>Responsibility</u>	
6. <i>Acknowledges fault</i> : Makes a statement acknowledging he/she was at fault (e.g., "I take responsibility," "It was my fault", "I should not have done...", "I am to blame for...")	.68
7. <i>Identifies wrong</i> : Expresses what he/she did wrong (e.g., "It was wrong not to tell you about my ex-girlfriend contacting me")	-.12
8. <i>Acknowledges impact</i> : Acknowledges that his/her behaviours affected his/her partner (e.g., "I know that me not telling you hurt you because it could have made you think that I was interested in her again")	.67
<u>Forbearance</u>	
9. <i>Promise of non-reoccurrence</i> : Makes an explicit promise that the event will not reoccur or that he/she will do better in the future.	.73
10. <i>Betterment of future behaviour</i> : Talks about how he/she intends on trying to improve his/her behaviour in the future so that the chances of the event happening again may be reduced (e.g., "I will try to listen to you when you want to vent next time," "Next time I will try to think more about how you might feel before I make a comment"; uses "we-talk" without appearing blaming—"Maybe we can set aside a time to	.80

talk about important things like this instead of trying to talk when we are too tired.”)

11. *Elicits partner’s help for future*: Talks constructively about how the partner can be helpful so that the event does not happen again, without appearing blaming (e.g., “Maybe next time you could tell me more directly when you don’t like something I plan on doing this way we can talk about it and try to work it out.”) .83

Compensation

12. *Offer to “make it up”*: Expresses what he/she wants to do “make up” for the specific event (e.g., offers to do something that partner might enjoy, offers to make some kind of personal sacrifice as a gesture of good will) .85
13. *Attempt to reconnect*: Expresses what he/she would like to do to get reconnected as a couple (e.g., “I think we need some alone time, and I have something planned.”) .81
-

Table 7

Pearson Correlations between Coders' Micro-Ratings of Amends Behaviour

Amends Subcomponent	1	2	3	4
1. Remorse	--	.42**	-.05	.01
2. Responsibility		--	.12	.13
3. Forbearance			--	.14
4. Compensation				--

*Note: ** $p < .01$.*

Table 8

Inter-rater Reliability of Macro-Amends Coding Items

Item	Cronbach's α
1. To what extent did Partner B accept responsibility?	.78
2. To what extent did Partner B convey remorse for the event?	.79
3. To what extent did Partner B specify that they would "make it up" to Partner A in some way?	.93
4. To what extent did Partner B make a promise to try to avoid doing what they did in the future?	.83

Note: Item 3 assesses compensation; item 4 assesses forbearance.

Table 9

Pearson Correlations between Macro-Amends Coding Items

	1	2	3	4
1. Remorse	--	.73**	.11	.01
2. Responsibility		--	.36**	.03
3. Forbearance			--	.12
4. Compensation				--

*Note: ** $p < .01$.*

Table 10

Pearson Correlations between Coders' Macro-Ratings of Amends Components and Amends Composite with Corresponding Micro-Ratings

Remorse	.65**
Responsibility	.63**
Forbearance	.78**
Compensation	.81**
Amends Composite	.74**

*Note: ** $p < .01$.*

Table 11

Moderating Effects of Victims' Relationship Satisfaction on Experimental Manipulation of Amends and Responsiveness on Forgiveness

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Satisfaction	.15**	.04	3.55
Amends	.19	.15	1.28
Responsiveness	.20	.15	1.34
Amends x Responsiveness	-.46	.31	-1.52
Amends x Satisfaction	.02	.08	.25
Responsiveness x Satisfaction	-.04	.08	-.46
Amends x Responsiveness x Satisfaction	.20	.17	1.20

Note: ** $p < .01$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Amends and Responsiveness are effect coded.

Table 12

Moderating Effects of Victims' Perceptions of Event Severity on Experimental Manipulation of Amends and Responsiveness on Forgiveness

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Severity	-.05	.06	-.82
Amends	.19	.15	1.27
Responsiveness	.19	.15	1.27
Satisfaction	.15**	.04	3.70
Amends x Responsiveness	-.49	.30	-1.63
Amends x Severity	-.13	.12	-1.05
Responsiveness x Severity	.05	.12	.40
Amends x Responsiveness x Severity	.56*	.24	2.33

*Note: *p < .05 **p < .01. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Amends and Responsiveness are effect coded.*

Table 13

Testing Perceived Partner Responsiveness as a Mediator of the Effects of Amends and Responsiveness on Forgiveness

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
<u>Victims' Perceived Partner Responsiveness</u>			
Severity	.47**	.17	2.84
Dummy code	2.21***	.32	6.95
Severity x Dummy code	-.47*	.19	-2.46
Satisfaction	.18**	.05	3.42
<u>Victims' Forgiveness</u>			
Severity	-.18	.17	-1.05
Dummy code	-.33	.40	.41
Perceived Partner Responsiveness	.44**	.15	3.01
Satisfaction	.10*	.04	2.41
Severity x Dummy code	.13	.20	.65
Perceived Partner Responsiveness x Severity	-.11	.07	-1.53

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The dummy coded variable represents the contrast between the experimental conditions (amends only, responsiveness only, amends + responsiveness) and the control condition. Effects are modeled for low event severity.

Table 14

Testing Perceived Partner Amends as a Mediator of the Effects of Amends and Responsiveness on Forgiveness

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
<u>Victims' Perceived Partner Amends</u>			
Severity	.40	.34	1.20
Dummy code	2.00**	.63	3.18
Severity x Dummy code	-.38	.38	-1.0
Satisfaction	.14	.11	1.31
<u>Victims' Forgiveness</u>			
Severity	.05	.14	.33
Dummy code	.52	.27	1.93
Perceived Partner Amends	.07	.06	1.11
Satisfaction	.15	.33	3.75
Severity x Dummy code	-.13	.16	-.86
Perceived Partner Amends x Severity	-.05	.04	-1.23

Note: ** $p < .01$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The dummy coded variable represents the contrast between the experimental conditions (amends only, responsiveness only, amends + responsiveness) and the control condition. Effects are modeled for low event severity.

Table 15

Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Responsiveness Predicted by Coders' Macro-Ratings of Offenders' Responsive Behaviour

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsiveness</u>			
Coders' composite ratings of responsiveness	.28	.22	1.31
Effect code	.07	.29	.25
Coders' ratings x effect code	-.36	.43	-.86
<u>Perceptions of Partner Understanding</u>			
Coders' ratings of understanding	.37	.24	1.54
Effect code	.08	.37	.22
Coders' ratings x effect code	.09	.48	.18
<u>Perceptions of Partner Validation</u>			
Coders' ratings of validation	.20	.22	.94
Effect code	.07	.30	.25
Coders' ratings x effect code	-.84	.43	-1.95

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the responsiveness only and amends + responsiveness conditions.

Table 16

Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Responsiveness Predicted by Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Responsive Behaviour

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsiveness</u>			
Coders' composite ratings of responsiveness	.12	.23	.54
Effect code	.06	.30	.20
Coders' ratings x effect code	-.32	.45	-.70
<u>Perceptions of Partner Understanding</u>			
Coders' ratings of understanding	.31	.24	1.30
Effect code	.02	.37	.07
Coders' ratings x effect code	.24	.47	.51
<u>Perceptions of Partner Validation</u>			
Coders' ratings of validation	-.03	.23	-.11
Effect code	.09	.32	.27
Coders' ratings x effect code	-.57	.46	-1.23

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the responsiveness only and amends + responsiveness conditions.

Table 17

Pearson Correlations between Coders' Responsiveness Ratings and Corresponding Victims' Perceptions of Partner Responsiveness

	Composite Responsiveness	<u>Victims' Perceptions</u>	
		Understanding	Validation
<u>Coders' Macro-ratings</u>			
1. Composite Responsiveness	.24	.31	.08
2. Understanding	.16	.29	-.05
3. Validation	.29	.27	.21
<u>Coders' Micro-ratings</u>			
1. Composite Responsiveness	.11	.17	.00
2. Understanding	.16	.25	.00
3. Validation	.03	.05	.00

Table 18

Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Amends Predicted by Coders' Macro-Ratings of Offenders' Offers of Amends

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Amends</u>	
Coders' composite ratings of amends	.96*	.36	2.65
Effect code	.19	.41	.48
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.87*	.72	-1.21
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Remorse</u>	
Coders' ratings of remorse	.14	.32	.43
Effect code	.22	.42	.52
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.15	.64	-.23
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsibility</u>	
Coders' ratings of responsibility	.33	.20	1.66
Effect code	.51	.33	1.57
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.36	.40	-.90
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Compensation</u>	
Coders' ratings of compensation	.66	.39	1.69
Effect code	.31	.71	.43
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.08	.61	-.13
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Forbearance</u>	
Coders' ratings of forbearance	.63*	.29	2.16
Effect code	.37	.68	.54
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.23	.58	-.40

Note: * $p < .05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only and amends + responsiveness conditions.

Table 19

Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Amends Predicted by Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Offers of Amends

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Amends</u>	
Coders' composite ratings of amends	.23	.19	1.22
Effect code	.34	.45	.76
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.36	.38	-.94
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Remorse</u>	
Coders' ratings of remorse	.03	.26	.12
Effect code	.29	.38	.75
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.81	.52	-1.55
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsibility</u>	
Coders' ratings of responsibility	.42	.34	1.25
Effect code	.55	.33	1.67
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.66	.67	-.99
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Compensation</u>	
Coders' ratings of compensation	1.19	.75	1.56
Effect code	.23	.71	.32
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.82	1.51	-.54
		<u>Perceptions of Partner Forbearance</u>	
Coders' ratings of forbearance	.17	.55	.31
Effect code	.69	.73	.96
Coders' ratings x Effect code	.60	1.10	-.55

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only and amends + responsiveness conditions

Table 20

Moderating Effects of Event Severity on the Association between Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Offers of Amends and Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Amends

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Event Severity	-.29	.16	-1.83
Coders' ratings	-.18	.17	-1.02
Effect code	1.00*	.39	2.61
Coders' ratings x Effect code	.21	.34	-.60
Coders' ratings x Event Severity	-.71***	.16	-4.58
Effect code x Event Severity	-.56	-.56	-1.76
Coders' ratings x Effect code x Event Severity	1.11***	.31	3.59

*Note: * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only condition and the amends + responsiveness condition. Coders' ratings represent the composite score of ratings across all amends behaviours.*

Table 21

Moderating Effects of Event Severity on the Association between Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Remorse Behaviour and Victims' Perceptions of Partners' Remorse

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Event Severity	-.03	.17	-.19
Coders' ratings of remorse	-.11	.29	-.38
Effect code	.51	.41	1.24
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.36	.58	-.63
Coders' ratings x Event Severity	-.87*	.32	-2.70
Effect code x Event Severity	-.30	-.35	-.86
Coders' ratings x Effect code x Event Severity	-.04	.65	-.07

*Note: * $p < .05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only condition and the amends + responsiveness condition.*

Table 22

Victims' Perceived Partner Responsiveness Predicted by Coders' Macro-Ratings of Offenders' Amends

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsiveness</u>			
Coders' composite ratings of amends	.23	.19	1.22
Effect code	.34	.45	.76
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.36	.38	-.94
<u>Perceptions of Partner Responsiveness</u>			
Coders' ratings of forbearance	.03	.26	.12
Effect code	.29	.38	.75
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.81	.52	-1.55

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only condition and the amends + responsiveness condition.

Table 23

Victims' Perceived Partner Responsiveness Predicted by Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Offers of Amends

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Event Severity	-.12	.12	-1.04
Coders' ratings	-.33*	.17	-1.02
Effect code	.19	.39	2.61
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.10	.29	-.60
Coders' ratings x Event Severity	-.28*	.11	-4.58
Effect code x Event Severity	.03	.23	-1.76
Coders' ratings x Effect code x Event Severity	.22	.23	3.59

Note: * $p < .05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only condition and the amends + responsiveness condition. Coders' ratings represent the composite score of ratings across all amends behaviours.

Table 24

Victims' Perceived Partner Responsiveness Predicted by Coders' Micro-Ratings of Offenders' Remorse Behaviour

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	<i>t</i>
Event Severity	-.16	.12	-1.37
Coders' ratings of remorse	-.17	.20	.88
Effect code	.35	.28	1.24
Coders' ratings x Effect code	-.21	.40	.53
Coders' ratings x Event Severity	-.59*	.22	-2.68
Effect code x Event Severity	.12	.24	.51
Coders' ratings x Effect code x Event Severity	-.02	.44	-.05

Note: * $p < .05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. The effect code variable represents the contrast between the amends only condition and the amends + responsiveness condition.

Figure 1. Event severity moderating the effects of the experimental manipulation of offenders' amends and responsiveness on forgiveness

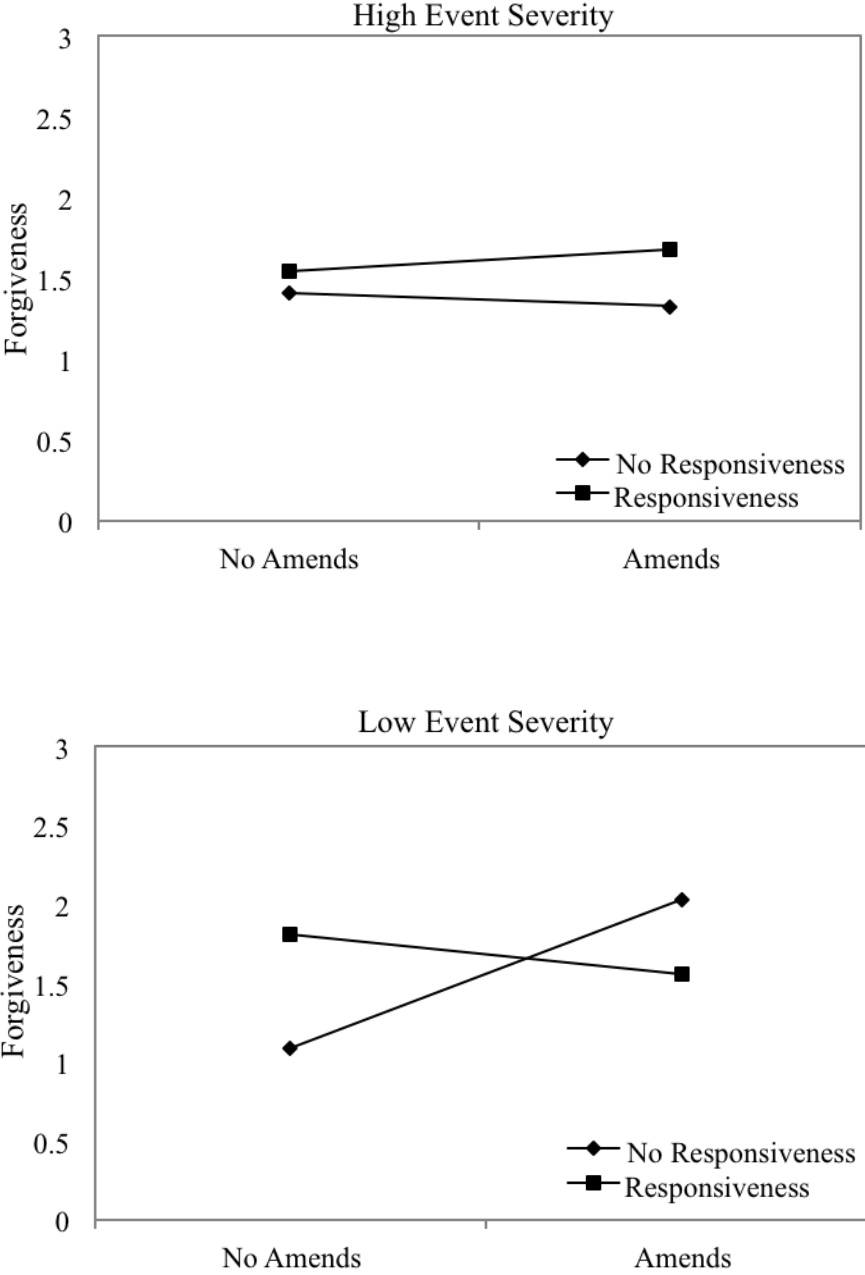


Figure 2. Victims' perceptions of partner amends predicted by coders' micro-ratings of offenders' overall amends behaviour at high and low event severity

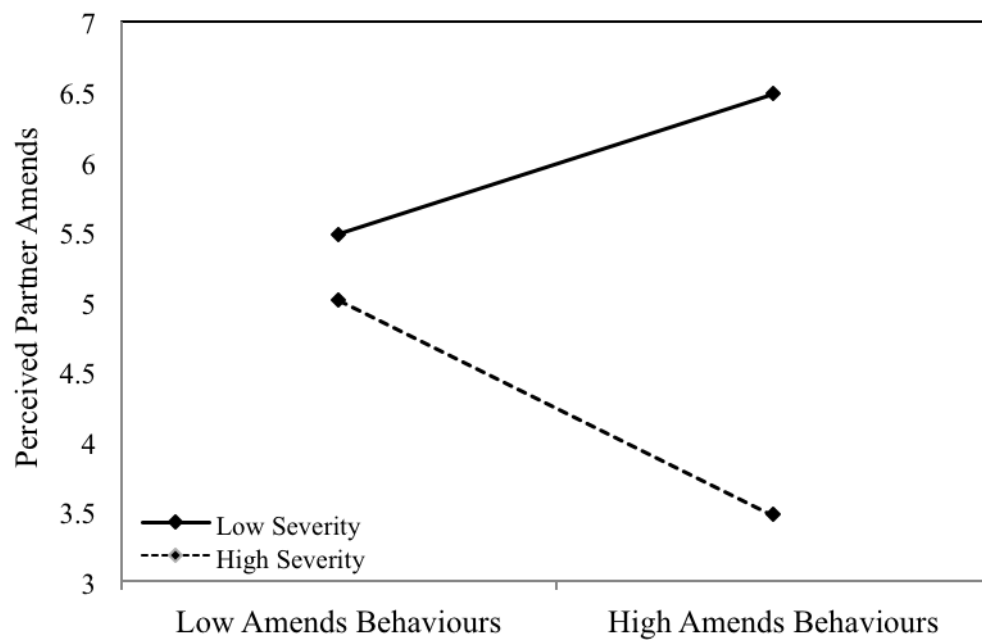


Figure 3. Victims' perceptions of partner remorse predicted by coders' micro-ratings of offenders' remorse behaviours at high and low event severity

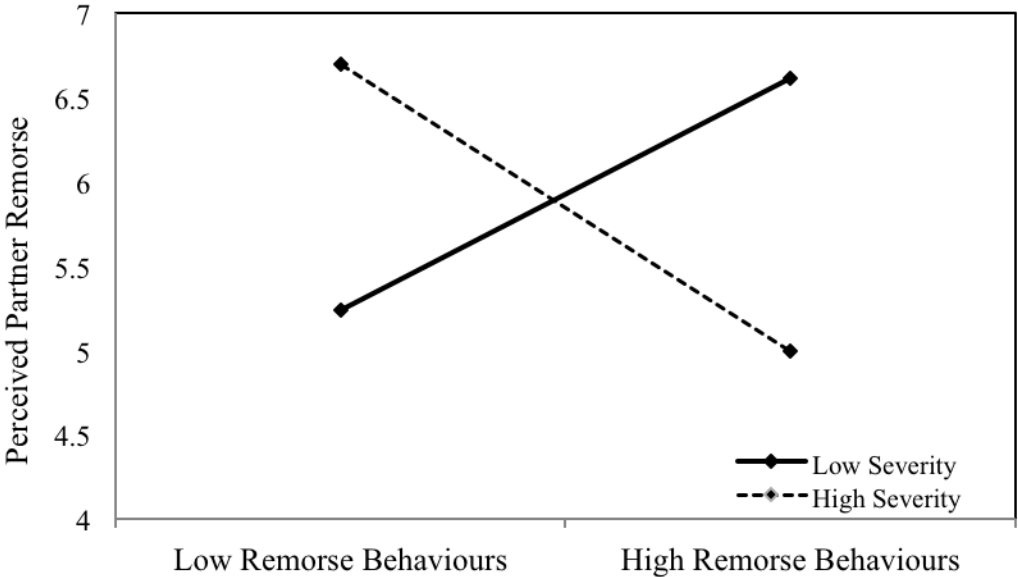


Figure 4. Victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness predicted by coders' micro-ratings of offenders' overall amends behaviour at high and low event severity

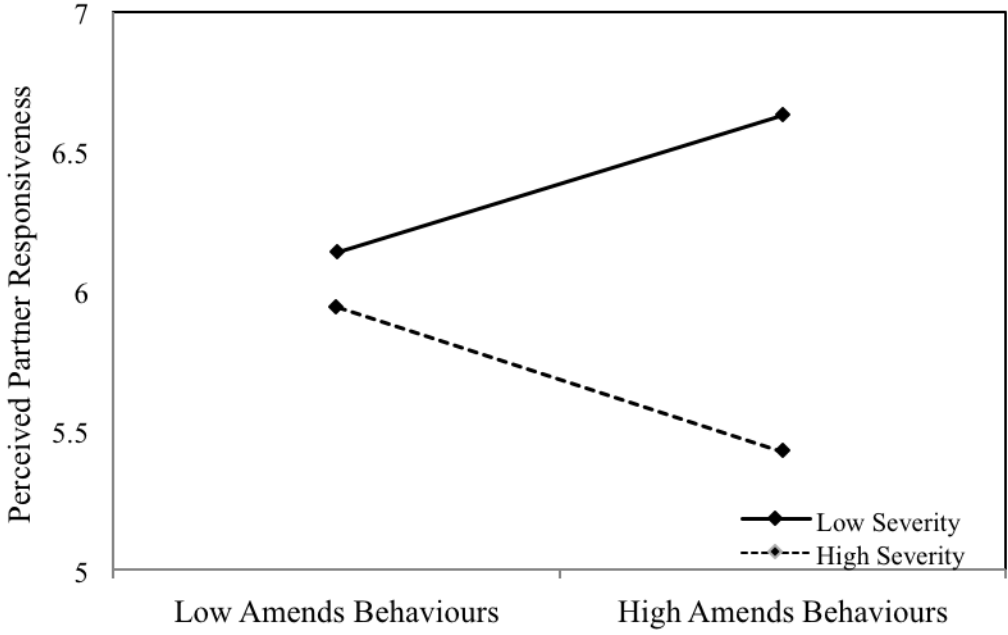


Figure 5. Victims' perceptions of partner responsiveness predicted by coders' micro-ratings of offenders' remorse behaviour at high and low event severity

