

Supplementary Table 1.

Top 10 issues reported in the sexual-condition

| Issue | Number of Participants Reported |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Frequency of sexual relations | N = 91 |
| Exploring passion/experimentation and/or too routine/lack of variety | N = 24 |
| One partner wants to do something that the other doesn't | N = 19 |
| Engagement in oral sex | N = 16 |
| Lack of sexual interest | N = 13 |
| When and/or where to have sex | N = 13 |
| Paying attention to sexual needs or preferences/reciprocating | N = 12 |
| Sexual initiation | N = 10 |
| Medications and/or health conditions that interfere with sex | N = 9 |
| Lack of romance/non-sexual intimacy | N = 9 |

Supplementary Table 2.

Top 10 issues reported in the non-sexual condition

| Issue | Number of Participants Reported |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Finances | N = 75 |
| Communicating effectively with each other | N = 33 |
| Career concerns | N = 22 |
| Housework/chores | N = 19 |
| Getting together with relatives | N = 17 |
| How much time to spend together versus apart | N = 17 |
| Decisions related to childcare (e.g. childcare, discipline etc.) | N = 13 |
| Relatives involved in relationship | N = 8 |
| Getting together with friends | N = 8 |
| How to spend free time | N = 8 |

Supplementary Table 3.

Study 1 Factor loadings from EFA with promax rotation for all 83 items from the Barriers to Communication Questionnaire (sexual condition; n = 299)

| Item | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| I will feel criticized as a result of this discussion | .855 | | |
| I will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion | .820 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel like a failure | .814 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel attacked | .813 | | |
| I will feel offended as a result of this discussion | .796 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel worthless | .789 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel badly about myself | .784 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel like a weak person | .781 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel that I am not normal | .760 | | |
| The discussion will hurt my sense of pride | .748 | | |
| The discussion will lead me to withdraw from my partner | .725 | | |
| I will feel pressured to change a part of myself that I cannot change | .716 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel angry | .715 | | |
| The discussion will lead me to feel guarded | .710 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel hopeless | .676 | | |
| This discussion will cause me to lose trust in my partner | .668 | | |
| I will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion | .664 | | |
| My partner will disapprove of me as a result of this discussion | .645 | | |
| I will not be able to express my point of view clearly and effectively | .615 | | |
| The discussion will make me sad | .598 | | |
| I will feel overwhelmed as a result of the discussion | .596 | | |
| The discussion will show that our relationship is a mistake | .578 | | |
| The discussion will lead to more problems in our relationship | .573 | .252 | |
| The discussion will cause my partner and I to argue | .545 | | .236 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel angry | .544 | .227 | |
| The discussion will be too emotional | .533 | .210 | |

Supplementary Table 3 continued.

| Item | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| The discussion will embarrass me | .512 | | |
| The discussion will make me feel frustrated | .511 | | .252 |
| The discussion will reveal that there is not much we can do about this issue | .509 | | |
| The discussion will lead to a lack of privacy between me and my partner | .499 | | -.223 |
| The discussion will reveal that the issue is beyond our control | .498 | | |
| Having this discussion will undermine the passion in our relationship | .476 | .290 | |
| This discussion will cause my partner to think I have been lying to them | .458 | | |
| The discussion will reveal core differences between us | .442 | | |
| The discussion will bring up past issues | .429 | | |
| The discussion will lead my partner to withdraw from me | .420 | .362 | |
| This discussion will make me feel vulnerable | .399 | .244 | |
| This discussion will lead to too much closeness between my partner and I | .394 | | -.468 |
| The discussion will reveal differences in our personal values | .391 | | |
| I will not know the right words to use when expressing my point of view | .355 | .246 | |
| I will feel anxious during the discussion | .316 | .304 | |
| The discussion will embarrass my partner | | .896 | |
| My partner will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion | | .883 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel incompetent | | .879 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a failure | | .867 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel badly about his/her self | | .865 | |
| My partner will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion | | .857 | |
| This discussion will make my partner feel vulnerable | | .852 | |
| My partner will feel guilty as a result of the discussion | | .819 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel worthless | | .788 | |
| The discussion will hurt my partner's sense of pride | | .759 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a weak person | | .748 | |
| The discussion will make my partner sad | | .741 | |
| The discussion will cause my partner to feel anxious | | .710 | |
| My partner will feel criticized as a result of this discussion | | .692 | |
| The discussion will lead my partner to feel guarded | | .601 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel attacked | | .596 | |

Supplementary Table 3 continued.

| Item | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| My partner will feel overwhelmed as a result of the discussion | .202 | .591 | |
| My partner will feel offended as a result of this discussion | .224 | .579 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel rejected | .235 | .574 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel disrespected | | .566 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel hopeless | .244 | .565 | |
| My partner will feel pressured to change a part of him/herself that she/he cannot change | | .539 | |
| I will feel selfish as a result of this discussion | | .488 | |
| The discussion would make me feel like I am being insensitive toward my partner | | .485 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel frustrated | .272 | .478 | .212 |
| I would be unsure of how to approach this discussion | .255 | .372 | |
| I will feel guilty as a result of the discussion | .329 | .360 | |
| I will be unsure of how the discussion will unfold | .241 | .305 | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel better about our relationship (RC) | | | .768 |
| The discussion will make me feel better about our relationship (RC) | | | .766 |
| The discussion will lead to more stability in our relationship (RC) | | | .764 |
| The discussion will draw us closer to each other (RC) | | | .762 |
| The discussion will make me feel accepted by my partner (RC) | | | .756 |
| The discussion will lead to a desired outcome (RC) | | | .735 |
| This discussion will make me happy (RC) | | | .721 |
| We will be able to solve the issue (RC) | .210 | | .718 |
| The discussion will lead my partner to trust me more (RC) | | | .695 |
| The discussion will lead to a resolution of the problem (RC) | | | .690 |
| The discussion will show that we are meant to be together (RC) | | | .685 |
| The discussion will make me feel good about myself (RC) | | | .677 |
| I will feel competent as a result of this discussion (RC) | | | .610 |
| The discussion will make me feel in control (RC) | | | .555 |

RC = reverse-coded item

Supplementary Table 4.

Study 1 Factor loadings from EFA with promax rotation for 69 items (reverse-coded items removed) from the Barriers to Communication Questionnaire (sexual condition; n = 299)

| Item | Factor 1 (Threat to Partner) | Factor 2 (Threat to Self) | Factor 3 (Threat to Relationship) |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| The discussion will embarrass my partner | .947 | | |
| This discussion will make my partner feel vulnerable | .848 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a failure | .829 | | |
| My partner will feel guilty as a result of the discussion | .825 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel incompetent | .797 | | |
| My partner will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion | .779 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel worthless | .759 | | |
| My partner will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion | .744 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a weak person | .732 | | |
| The discussion will hurt my partner's sense of pride | .728 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel badly about his/her self | .727 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner sad | .691 | | |
| The discussion will cause my partner to feel anxious | .634 | | |
| My partner will feel criticized as a result of this discussion | .590 | | .416 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel hopeless | .547 | .300 | |
| My partner will feel offended as a result of this discussion | .526 | | .378 |
| My partner will feel overwhelmed as a result of the discussion | .517 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel disrespected | .517 | | .344 |
| I would be unsure of how to approach this discussion | .516 | | |
| The discussion will lead my partner to feel guarded | .509 | | .445 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel rejected | .499 | | |
| The discussion will make my partner feel attacked | .495 | | .461 |
| I will feel selfish as a result of this discussion | .450 | | |

Supplementary Table 4 continued.

| Item | Factor 1 (Threat to Partner) | Factor 2 (Threat to Self) | Factor 3 (Threat to Relationship) |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| My partner will feel pressured to change a part of him/herself that she/he cannot Change | .442 | | .343 |
| The discussion would make me feel like I am being insensitive toward my partner | .394 | | .317 |
| I will feel guilty as a result of the discussion | .381 | | |
| I will feel anxious during the discussion | .373 | | |
| I will be unsure of how the discussion will unfold | .354 | | |
| Having this discussion will undermine the passion in our relationship | .341 | | .301 |
| I will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion | | .840 | |
| The discussion will make me feel like a failure | | .824 | |
| The discussion will make me feel badly about myself | | .815 | |
| I will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion | | .798 | |
| The discussion will make me feel that I am not normal | | .794 | |
| The discussion will make me feel like a weak person | | .772 | |
| The discussion will make me feel worthless | | .746 | |
| The discussion will embarrass me | | .708 | -.320 |
| The discussion will hurt my sense of pride | | .699 | |
| The discussion will make me feel hopeless | | .558 | |
| This discussion will cause me to lose trust in my partner | | .550 | |
| I will feel offended as a result of this discussion | | .536 | .303 |
| The discussion will make me sad | | .516 | |
| I will feel pressured to change a part of myself that I cannot change | | .496 | .371 |
| This discussion will make me feel vulnerable | .322 | .489 | |
| The discussion will lead me to withdraw from my partner | | .483 | .352 |
| I will feel overwhelmed as a result of the discussion | | .428 | |
| This discussion will cause my partner to think I have been lying to them | .319 | .389 | |
| The discussion will lead me to feel guarded | | .385 | .380 |
| The discussion will lead to a lack of privacy between me and my partner | | .384 | |
| I will not know the right words to use when expressing my point of view | .338 | .383 | |
| I will not be able to express my point of view clearly and effectively | | .359 | .355 |

Supplementary Table 4 continued.

| Item | Factor 1 (Threat to Partner) | Factor 2 (Threat to Self) | Factor 3 (Threat to Relationship) |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| The discussion will show that our relationship is a mistake | | .350 | |
| This discussion will lead to too much closeness between my partner and I | | .349 | |
| The discussion will reveal that the issue is beyond our control | | .335 | |
| The discussion will be too emotional | | .321 | .310 |
| The discussion will cause my partner and I to argue | | | .827 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel angry | | | .741 |
| The discussion will make me feel angry | | | .713 |
| The discussion will reveal core differences between us | | | .695 |
| The discussion will reveal differences in our personal values | | | .627 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel frustrated. | .423 | | .538 |
| The discussion will make me feel frustrated | | | .528 |
| I will feel criticized as a result of this discussion | | .487 | .520 |
| The discussion will make me feel attacked | | .410 | .511 |
| The discussion will bring up past issues | | | .480 |
| My partner will disapprove of me as a result of this discussion | | | .447 |
| The discussion will lead my partner to withdraw from me | | .362 | .417 |
| The discussion will lead to more problems in our relationship | | | .383 |
| The discussion will reveal that there is not much we can do about this issue | | | .342 |

Factor loadings < .3 are excluded.

Bolded = meets apriori determined factor loading criteria of 0.4 primary factor loading, and no cross-loading of .3 or more on a second factor.

Top 7 items from each subfactor chosen for shortened subscale.

Supplementary Table 5.

Study 1 CFA results - sexual condition (n = 299)

| Subscale | β | <i>SE</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|---------|-----------|----------|
| Threat to Partner | | | |
| The discussion will embarrass my partner. | 0.79 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| This discussion will make my partner feel vulnerable. | 0.77 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a failure. | 0.84 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| My partner will feel guilty as a result of the discussion. | 0.69 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel incompetent. | 0.80 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| My partner will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion. | 0.78 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel worthless. | 0.79 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| Threat to Self | | | |
| The discussion will make me feel worthless. | 0.81 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel like a weak person. | 0.80 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel that I am not normal. | 0.68 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| I will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion. | 0.79 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel badly about myself. | 0.84 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel like a failure. | 0.80 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| I will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion. | 0.79 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| Threat to Relationship | | | |
| The discussion will make me feel frustrated. | 0.73 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will bring up past issues. | 0.67 | 0.04 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will reveal differences in our personal values. | 0.67 | 0.04 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will reveal core differences between us. | 0.77 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel angry. | 0.83 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will cause my partner and I to argue. | | | |

Supplementary Table 6.

Study 1 CFA results – nonsexual condition (n = 315)

| Subscale | β | <i>SE</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|---------|-----------|----------|
| Threat to Partner | | | |
| The discussion will embarrass my partner. | 0.79 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| This discussion will make my partner feel vulnerable. | 0.7 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel like a failure. | 0.86 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| My partner will feel guilty as a result of the discussion. | 0.7 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel incompetent. | 0.87 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| My partner will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion. | 0.83 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make my partner feel worthless. | 0.87 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| Threat to Self | | | |
| The discussion will make me feel worthless. | 0.81 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel like a weak person. | 0.79 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel that I am not normal. | 0.65 | 0.04 | < 0.001 |
| I will feel ashamed as a result of this discussion. | 0.77 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel badly about myself. | 0.78 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel like a failure. | 0.8 | 0.02 | < 0.001 |
| I will feel inadequate as a result of this discussion. | 0.77 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| Threat to Relationship | | | |
| The discussion will make me feel frustrated. | 0.8 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will bring up past issues. | 0.6 | 0.04 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will reveal differences in our personal values. | 0.53 | 0.05 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will reveal core differences between us. | 0.57 | 0.04 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will make me feel angry. | 0.8 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |
| The discussion will cause my partner and I to argue. | 0.81 | 0.03 | < 0.001 |

Supplementary Table 7.

Study 2 ANOVA Summary for Threat to Self by Condition and Gender

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| Condition | 661.81 | 1 | 661.81 | 10.64* |
| Gender | 126.38 | 1 | 126.38 | 2.03 |
| Condition x Gender | 41.56 | 1 | 41.56 | .67 |
| Error | 18849.88 | 303 | 62.21 | |

Note: *p<.01

Supplementary Table 8.

Study 2 ANOVA Summary for Threat to Partner by Condition and Gender

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| Condition | 1.21 | 1 | 1.21 | .02 |
| Gender | 123.78 | 1 | 123.78 | 2.29 |
| Condition x Gender | 81.41 | 1 | 81.41 | 1.51 |
| Error | 16475.42 | 305 | 54.02 | |

Supplementary Table 9.

Study 2 ANOVA Summary for Threat to Relationship by Condition and Gender

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| Condition | 15.38 | 1 | 15.38 | .43 |
| Gender | 37.51 | 1 | 37.51 | 1.04 |
| Condition x Gender | 25.45 | 1 | 25.45 | .71 |
| Error | 10730.82 | 298 | 36.01 | |