EFFECTS OF REFLECTION, PROBING, AND PARADOXICAL THERAPIST RESPONSES ON CLIENT SELF-ACCEPTANCE

DISSERATION

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Client self-acceptance is a crucial element of mental health and a goal of psychotherapy. It has been demonstrated that client self-disclosure in psychotherapy is instrumental in the promotion of self-acceptance. Reflection, probing, and paradoxical therapist responses frequently are used to elicit self-disclosure. Cognitive dissonance theory was used to provide a theoretical understanding of these techniques and their use in the promotion of self-acceptance. Reflection, probing, and paradoxical responses were conceptualized as providing a client with different perceptions of choice over self-disclosure that may affect the occurrence of self-acceptance. This study compared the effects of the reflection, probing, and paradoxical techniques on self-acceptance and anxiety following self-disclosure.

One hundred and twenty-four undergraduate students were recruited and randomly assigned to the reflection, probing, paradoxical, or attention control interview conditions. In the three experimental conditions, the subjects were asked to talk about their sexual fantasies to an interviewer who employed one of the three experimental techniques. The attention control subjects were asked to talk about their
sexual fantasies into a tape recorder. Analyses of covariance were performed on two measures of self-acceptance (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Subject Comfort Questionnaire) and an anxiety measure (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory).

There was mixed evidence for the general hypothesis that the three experimental techniques would have differential effects on self-acceptance. The reflection and paradoxical conditions produced the least amount of anxiety and slight increases in self-acceptance. The probing condition produced a moderate amount of anxiety and the largest increase in self-acceptance. The attention control condition produced the greatest amount of anxiety and the smallest increase in self-acceptance.

In contrast to cognitive dissonance theory, increases in self-acceptance were not linearly related to increasing amounts of perceived choice and anxiety. Instead, changes in self-acceptance appeared to be curvilinearly related to changes in anxiety. This suggested that anxiety might have been a better predictor of changes in self-acceptance than the subject's perception of choice over self-disclosure. The probing technique produced a moderate amount of anxiety, which appeared to be optimal for changes in self-acceptance. Future research was suggested.
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EFFECTS OF REFLECTION, PROBING, AND PARADOXICAL THERAPIST RESPONSES ON CLIENT SELF-ACCEPTANCE

The importance of self-acceptance has figured prominently in personality theories of a number of writers (Fromm, 1941; Horney, 1937; Rogers, 1951). In fact, Rogers (1961) construes his system of therapy as being a means of bringing about modification of attitudes toward oneself. Consequently, the phenomenon of self-acceptance, generally defined as a person's ability to accept things about or related to himself or herself, is considered by many to be a crucial element of mental health. Interest in this concept has spurred an abundance of research which has been conducted to examine the importance of self-acceptance to positive therapeutic change and to determine the conditions in therapy that promote a person's acceptance of himself or herself.

Relationship of Self-Concept and Self-Acceptance

In his theory of personality, Rogers explains the importance of self-acceptance as it relates to the development and subsequent impact of a person's self-concept on his or her psychological adjustment or maladjustment. The self-concept is a central component of Rogers' theory of personality and psychotherapy and generally is defined as a description of oneself which is admissible to awareness (Rogers, 1951; Wylie, 1974).
The development of the self-concept is a dynamic process which is strongly dependent on the individual's perception of experiences in his or her interpersonal environment. A person's perception of these experiences, in turn, is influenced by the need for what Rogers terms "positive regard" from others and "positive self-regard" (Rogers, 1959). Both of these needs are considered to be learned needs, developed in early infancy, which are universal, pervasive, and persistent in all human beings. The need for positive regard refers to the person's satisfaction with receiving the approval of others and frustration at receiving disapproval. The need for positive self-regard is a more internalized version of this, in that the person feels satisfaction with approving of and dissatisfaction with disapproving of himself or herself. Because of the need for positive regard, an individual is sensitive to, or can be affected by, the attitudes toward him or her of the significant people in his or her life. Consequently, in the process of gaining approval and disapproval from others, the person develops a self-concept that includes only those experiences or characteristics of himself or herself which provide the positive regard from others. Any experiences that have proven unworthy of positive regard are excluded from the self-concept. Rogers refers to such standards for discerning what is valuable and what is not valuable about oneself as conditions of worth (Rogers, 1951).
A product of a person's need for positive regard is the need for self-consistency or self-actualization. Rogers (1951) defines the need for self-consistency as a felt pressure to behave and experience oneself in ways that are consistent with one's self-concept because to behave in a discrepant way would potentially frustrate the need for positive regard and positive self-regard. As a result, an individual will accept and further develop those experiences which seem consistent with the self-concept. Accepting experiences which are inconsistent with his or her picture of self is unlikely.

According to Rogers (1959), there are legitimate thoughts, feelings, and actions in which a person can engage that are discrepant with his or her present self-concept. When the potential for this occurs, the person becomes anxious and vulnerable and will handle these feelings in one of three ways. First of all, it is obvious that the person can proceed to engage in the discrepant experience. Secondly, he or she can deny or distort the experience in order to reduce the anxiety and preserve the self-concept from threat. The third, and more adaptive, way involves broadening the self-concept so that these experiences can be recognized and accepted as legitimate parts of oneself.

Engaging in behaviors which are discrepant with a person's self-concept will cause that person to feel unworthy or guilty. For example, if an individual who perceives himself or herself as an honest and trustworthy person steals money from a friend,
then he or she will feel guilty and ashamed. Rogers (1961) states that people work to avoid feelings of guilt and shame. Consequently, they often distort a discrepant experience so that it becomes more consistent with the self-concept. A situation often cited to exemplify such distortion involves a college student who thinks of himself or herself as a poor student but receives an unexpected grade of "A" on a school project. The student can retain his or her self-image as a poor student by distorting the conceptualization of this success: "The teacher is a fool," or "It was pure luck," (Rogers, 1959, p. 228). If the person uses denial, he or she will not consciously perceive the existence or occurrence of the discrepant thought, feeling, or behavior. Psychological maladjustment is a function of the use of defensive processes, such as denial and distortion, to handle experiences which are discrepant from the self-concept (Rogers, 1951). These defenses result in an incongruency between the person's self-perception and his or her actual experiences. Such a discrepancy produces rigidity, tension, and confusion in the person because even though these experiences are not recognized as part of his or her self-concept, they continue to exist and influence behavior.

With respect to the broadening of the self-concept as a means of handling discrepant experiences, Rogers' theory of psychotherapy describes the process by which this modification of the self-concept occurs. Generally speaking, the process
of client-centered therapy involves an intervention into the incongruence an individual has developed between his or her experiences and self-concept. This process includes the therapeutic goal of promoting a more flexible and changing self-concept which can incorporate a much larger proportion of the person's experiences. A state of congruence or self-acceptance occurs when the person can own an experience as being a legitimate part of the self-concept (Rogers, 1961). Thus, self-acceptance is an end goal of client-centered therapy because self-acceptance frees the person of constricting defenses and allows him or her to develop potentials to the fullest.

Psychotherapy and Self-Acceptance

Much of Rogers' work has been directed toward the specification and delineation of the therapeutic conditions which he believes are necessary and sufficient for the promotion of greater self-acceptance. The basic theory of client-centered therapy states that if the therapist offers certain conditions (viz., personal congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding), then growth-producing responses will result. Rogers (1951) defines the therapist's personal congruence to exist when his or her inner experiences and outer expression of those experiences match. The therapist is without a false front and can openly express feelings and attitudes that are present in the relationship with the client. Unconditional positive regard involves the communication of
deep and genuine caring for the client that is not contaminated by evaluation of the client's feelings, behaviors, and thoughts as good or bad. Empathic understanding is a deep and subjective understanding of the client conveyed in such a way as to communicate an understanding of what the client is feeling and the experiences underlying these feelings.

These three attitudes on the part of the therapist, are regarded by Rogers as the catalytic agents in the client-centered therapeutic relationship. Rogers (1951) proposes that if the client perceives these attitudes and if he or she is uncomfortable with himself or herself, there will be movement in the direction of greater self-acceptance. With respect to the validity of this therapeutic approach as a vehicle for psychological growth, a number of outcome studies report client-centered psychotherapy to be effective (Luborsky, Singer, & Luborsky, 1975; Meador, 1971; Rogers, 1967, 1970; Rogers & Dymond, 1954; Shlien & Zimring, 1970; Smith & Glass, 1977).

**Self-Acceptance through Self-Disclosure**

More specific exploration has been conducted toward the discovery and examination of variables which are believed to be instrumental in promoting positive outcomes in therapy. These factors commonly are referred to as process variables. Research on client process variables has been quite productive in distinguishing client behaviors and characteristics that are correlated with change (Garfield, 1971). Client
self-disclosure and self-exploration are process variables with particular relevance to client-centered therapy. Rogers (1957) proposes that the client-centered therapist creates a helping relationship in which the client experiences the necessary freedom to explore areas of his or her life that presently are denied or distorted in awareness. Client self-disclosure and exploration, in turn, lead to increased self-understanding and self-acceptance.

In support of the notion that client self-disclosure and exploration are vital components and criteria of effective therapy, Braaten (1961) reports that increasing expression of self-referent feelings in therapy characterizes clients who have better treatment outcomes. Rogers and Truax (1962) report that the degree of self-exploration in the second psychotherapy interview correlates .70 with final case outcome. In light of these results and others (Kiesler, 1971; Truax & Carkhuff, 1965, 1967; van der Veen, 1967), it seems reasonable to conclude that, at least in client-centered therapy, immediate disclosure and exploration of self consistently are predictive of good therapeutic outcome.

Psychological Consistency and the Self-Concept

A psychological consistency model, such as Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, has been useful in describing and understanding the process by which an individual incorporates discrepant experiences or behaviors in his or her self-concept. Festinger's theory states that persons
strive for psychological consistency among their cognitions. In Festinger's definition, cognitions include actions, feelings, perceptions, thoughts, or beliefs. The awareness of an inconsistency among cognitions produces a state of tension or anxiety which motivates the person to resolve the discrepancy. Consequently, the person changes one or the other of the two cognitions involved in the dissonance, so that anxiety is reduced and psychological consistency is reestablished.

Further research in the area of cognitive dissonance suggests that the major source of change in dissonance reduction is not the inconsistency between two surface cognitions, but rather the significance of the two cognitions to the deeper beliefs of the person (Aronson, 1969). Therefore, dissonance theory has made its clearest and strongest predictions when dealing with the consistency of a person's self-concept and cognitions about a particular behavior. For example, dissonance theory predicts that for people with low self-concepts, the good feelings aroused by products of success will be tempered by the discomfort caused by the dissonance (i.e., the dissonance between a low self-concept and cognitions about high performance). Several studies in the area of cognitive dissonance demonstrate that people who expect failure are somewhat discomforted by success (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1963; Brock, Adelman, Edwards, & Schuck, 1965; Cottrell, 1965).
Empirical Research on Attitude Changes

According to Festinger (1957), the way in which a person decreases dissonance is not always determined by the objective facts of the situation. Instead, he or she may resolve the discrepancy by choosing to alter one of the conflictual cognitions or by attributing the cognitions to some compelling external pressures or reasons. Much of the research generated by cognitive dissonance theory has been directed toward the examination and specification of those factors which appear to influence the way in which a person reduces dissonance.

With respect to the promotion of self-acceptance, Festinger's research on forced compliance and free choice provides an understanding of how the conditions under which self-disclosure takes place affect the probability that self-acceptance occurs. For example, Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) employed a forced-compliance paradigm, in order to examine the effects of external motivation on attitude change. In forced-compliance designs, the individual is induced to engage in a particular behavior that implies personal endorsement of a particular set of beliefs or attitudes. Following his or her behavior, the change in actual attitude or belief is assessed, to see if the change is a function of the behavior in which he or she engages or of the manipulated stimulus conditions under which it is evoked.

In the study by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959), subjects were induced, for either 1 or 20 dollars, to tell a waiting
fellow student that the repetitive tasks were fun and interesting. This was followed by an assessment of the subjects' actual attitudes. The low-compensation subjects expressed significantly more favorable attitudes toward their tasks than did the high-compensation subjects or control subjects. Dissonance theory interprets these results by noting that all subjects initially held the cognition that the tasks are dull and boring. In addition, however, the experimental subjects had the cognition that they had expressed favorable attitudes toward the tasks to a fellow student. These two cognitions are interpreted as dissonant for subjects in the one-dollar condition because their overt behavior did not seem consistent with their cognition about the task. The dissonance is further increased by the small compensation they received for expressing such favorable, but discrepant, attitudes. To reduce the resulting dissonance, the subjects changed their cognition about the task so that it was consistent with their overt behavior. In other words, the lower compensated subjects became more favorable toward the tasks. The subjects in the 20-dollar condition, however, experienced little or no dissonance because engaging in such behavior was attributed to or understood in terms of the large external compensation they received. Hence, their final attitude ratings do not significantly differ from those of the control subjects. The results of this study state that neither dissonance nor attitude change is experienced when there is
sufficient external motivation for engaging in behaviors that are nevertheless discrepant with beliefs. Instead, the individual simply attributes his or her discrepant behavior to those external reasons or causes.

In order to examine the effects of choice on attitude change, several investigations have employed the free-choice paradigm. In this design, a subject is permitted to make a selection from a set of objects or courses of actions. The dependent variable is the subsequent attitude rating of the subject's chosen and rejected alternatives. Dissonance theory states that any unfavorable aspects of the chosen alternative and any favorable aspects of the rejected alternatives provide cognitions that are dissonant with the behavior of the subject. To reduce the resulting dissonance, the individual exaggerates the favorable features of the chosen alternative and belittles its unfavorable aspects. This leads to change in the subject's rating of the rejected alternatives. These predictions are confirmed in a number of studies (Brock, 1962; Festinger, 1964).

Cohen and Latane' (1962) utilized a different design in examining the impact of choice on attitude change. Subjects in the low-choice condition were told to make a speech on a salient issue which was discrepant with their beliefs. They were given no chance to decline or contribute to the structuring of the task. The subjects in the high-choice condition were asked to give a discrepant speech but were assured that it was entirely their choice. The results support the
prediction that freedom of choice in taking a stand discrepant from one's attitudes produces more attitude change toward the discrepant position, so that the greater the choice, the greater the attitude change.

The results of the forced-compliance and free-choice studies are useful in understanding the process by which a person incorporates discrepant behaviors into his or her self-concept. Particularly, the consistency-theory studies can be used to examine the potential effect of perceived choice in self-disclosure on the promotion of self-acceptance in therapy.

**Techniques for Self-Disclosure**

Given the role of self-disclosure in therapy, it is apparent that therapist behaviors which serve to promote client self-disclosure, while at the same time encouraging self-acceptance, are potentially valuable to the therapeutic process of change. In reference to the consistency-theory studies, however, some self-disclosure or interview techniques may serve to detract from the process of self-acceptance. The methods used by the therapist to promote client self-disclosure appear to be as important as self-disclosure in the promotion of self-acceptance. Reflection is a conventional therapist response that often is used to elicit further client disclosures in therapy. Reflection involves communicating a basic understanding of what the client is feeling and the experiences underlying these feelings (Carkhuff, 1969).

Examples of reflection include: "You are feeling pretty
inadequate, and it is really getting you down," and "You are uneasy because you are not at all sure this is going to work, but you feel you have to try something."

In client-centered therapy, reflection is regarded as more than just a method for eliciting client self-disclosure. It is considered to be an integral part of the therapeutic conditions which promote change (Rogers, 1951). According to Rogers, the prerequisites to effective therapy include the therapist's attitudes of personal genuineness, unconditional positive regard and acceptance, and empathic understanding. Reflection is the vehicle through which the therapist conveys an empathic understanding of how the client feels and what the client is saying about himself or herself. Rogerian theory maintains that the use of reflection not only promotes self-disclosure, but also helps the client to explore and eventually accept parts of the self that are denied or distorted (Rogers, 1961). In support of this notion, research demonstrates that therapist warmth and accurate empathy are related to the depth of client exploration (Carkhuff, 1969) and to increases in client self-acceptance and psychological adjustment (Baker, 1960; Carkhuff, 1972; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Truax, Carkhuff, & Douds, 1964).

The interview technique of probing is used to encourage the client to disclose further by directly requesting such behavior and inviting the client to elaborate as completely as possible on these disclosures (Egan, 1975). By definition, the
probe is usually an open-ended question that requires more than a minimal one-word answer (Hackney & Nye, 1973). Examples of probing responses include: "Would you tell me more about that?", and "Can you be more specific?" Research demonstrates that the probing technique is as effective as reflection in eliciting client disclosure and discussion of feelings (Barnabei, Cormier, & Nye, 1974; Ehrlich, D'Augelli, & Danish, 1979; Highlen & Baccus, 1977).

The use of the paradoxical technique involves prescribing the behaviors in which the client currently is engaged or is about to engage (Haley, 1963). When faced with the explicit request to continue their behavior, clients often respond by decreasing the frequency of the prescribed behavior. This technique is used to promote self-disclosure by directing the client to withhold from disclosure any and all material that he or she is not yet prepared to relate to the therapist. Examples of paradoxical responses include: "I do not want you to tell me anything that you do not want to," and "Be only as specific as you are ready to be." Paradoxical instructions are thought to be effective in promoting desired behavior change in therapy (Fish, 1973; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974).

Rationale for the Present Study

Unlike the reflection response, the probing and paradoxical procedures have not been evaluated with respect to their subsequent effects on client self-acceptance. Given the role of self-acceptance in therapeutic change, the utility of
an effective self-disclosure technique, that nevertheless detracts from the process of self-acceptance, would be questionable. Consequently, the major purpose of the present study is to compare the effects of the reflection, probing, and paradoxical techniques on client self-acceptance.

Although the reflection, probing, and paradoxical techniques are similar in their intentions to promote client self-disclosure and exploration, there are differences that may influence their subsequent impact on self-acceptance. Apart from obvious procedural differences, the reflection and paradoxical techniques give the client the perception of responsibility for or control over such things as what, when, and how much he or she discloses to the therapist. This is accomplished through the use of reflection, in which a therapist simply follows the client's lead in the interview and reflects those feelings and experiences which the client decides to disclose. With the paradoxical technique, the client appears to be in control as a result of the therapist's verbal acceptance of the client's current level of self-disclosure and encouragement to determine for himself or herself the degree of disclosure with which the client is most comfortable. On the other hand, the probing technique gives the client the perception of having very little control over the parameters of self-disclosure. By their very nature, probing responses aid the therapist in directing the client toward specific thoughts, feelings, or actions. This adds to the directionality
of the interview and places explicit demands for production and detail on the client.

In conclusion, the reflection, probing, and paradoxical responses are conceptualized as providing a client with different perceptions of personal responsibility or choice during the therapeutic interaction. With the reflection and paradoxical techniques, the client would not be pressured to disclose but would be given the responsibility to choose what, when, and how much he or she discloses. With the probing technique, the therapist would make these decisions and encourage the client to comply with the requests. From a psychological consistency model, the perception of choice over self-disclosure would influence the likelihood that the client would accept and integrate the disclosure into his or her self-concept. If these two premises are valid, these three self-disclosure techniques would not be equally effective in their ability to promote or enhance self-acceptance in a client. Given the increasing popularity and utilization of these techniques to promote client self-disclosure, there, nevertheless, has been no investigation of this issue. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to compare the effects of these three techniques on client self-acceptance following self-disclosure.

Statement of the Problem

Self-acceptance generally is defined as the ability to accept things about oneself which are perceived as being
discrepant from one's self-concept. This ability is considered by many to be a crucial element of mental health and, thus, a significant goal of psychotherapy (Festinger, 1957; Fromm, 1941; Horney, 1937; Rogers, 1951, 1961).

Research demonstrates that client self-disclosure in therapy leads to increases in self-acceptance and better treatment outcome (Braaten, 1961; Rogers & Truax, 1962). Consequently, there have been many attempts to ascertain and employ therapist behaviors which promote client self-disclosure. In reference to Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and research on attitude change, the conditions under which a client discloses affect the probability that self-acceptance of the disclosure occurs.

Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance states that a person strives for psychological consistency between cognitions and deeper beliefs about himself or herself (Aronson, 1969; Festinger, 1957). The awareness of an inconsistency between the two produces dissonance and anxiety, which motivates the person to resolve the discrepancy. Consequently, the discrepancy is resolved by changing one of the conflictive cognitions or by attributing their occurrence to some external cause. Research in this area shows that the way in which a person handles cognitions that are discrepant with deeper beliefs is significantly related to his or her perception of the cause of those cognitions. Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) report that when there is sufficient external motivation
for engaging in behaviors which are discrepant with personal beliefs, the individual does not report anxiety or an attitude change. Instead, he or she simply attributes the discrepant behavior to the external reasons. Cohen and Latane' (1962) demonstrate that when given the choice to take a discrepant stand from one's attitudes, subjects experience dissonance and, subsequently, a change in attitude toward the discrepant position.

Reflection, probing, and paradoxical responses frequently are used in various combinations to elicit client self-disclosure in therapy. Unlike the reflection response, the probing and paradoxical techniques have not been evaluated with respect to their subsequent effects on client self-acceptance. Given the importance of self-acceptance in therapeutic change, the utility of an effective self-disclosure technique that, nevertheless, detracts from this process is questionable.

These three responses are conceptualized as providing a client with different perceptions of personal responsibility or choice during the therapeutic interaction. The reflection and paradoxical responses would allow the client to choose the degree to which he or she discloses to the therapist. This would be accomplished through the use of reflection, in which a therapist simply follows the client's lead in the interview and reflects those feelings and experiences which the client decides to disclose. With the paradoxical technique, the client would appear to be in control as the result
of the therapist's verbal acceptance of the client's current level of disclosure and encouragement to determine for himself or herself the degree of disclosure with which the client would be most comfortable. Dissonance theory would suggest that if this disclosed material were discrepant from the self-concept, the client would experience dissonance and anxiety over the fact that he or she chose to acknowledge and discuss such information. In an effort to reduce the anxiety, the client would maximize the positive qualities and minimize the negative aspects of this information. Consequently, the information or characteristic would be viewed in a more favorable way. As a result of this change in the discrepant cognition, it would be more consistent with the self-concept. The present study hypothesizes that there will be no significant difference between the reflection condition and the paradoxical condition in the promotion of self-acceptance following self-disclosure.

With the probing response, the client would be given no choice or control over self-disclosure. Through the use of direct and guiding questions, the therapist would decide when, what, and how much the client would be asked to disclose and encourage the client to comply with these requests. Dissonance theory would predict that if material were disclosed that is discrepant with the self-concept, the client would experience little or no anxiety because he or she could easily attribute having disclosed such information to the demands and requests
of the therapist. As the result of an external attribution for behavior in the session, the client would maintain the original attitude about the discrepant material. The client would also continue to perceive this information as discrepant from his or her self-concept. It is hypothesized that the reflection and the paradoxical conditions will promote significantly more self-acceptance than the probing condition.

The present study employs the use of an attention control group in which subjects were asked to disclose information about themselves into a tape recorder. Beyond providing them with the standard set of interview questions, these subjects received no assistance, attention, or further instruction from an interviewer. As is the case in the reflection and paradoxical conditions, the attention control subjects have to decide the degree to which they will self-disclose. Given the absence of the interviewer's participation during the session, the attention control condition provides the person with even less interview structure and pressure to disclose than does the reflection or paradoxical conditions. Festinger's theoretical model would suggest that the attention control condition would promote more self-acceptance than the reflection or paradoxical conditions. A critical factor however, which differentiates the attention control condition from these other two conditions, is the absence of an accepting and understanding interviewer who implicitly or explicitly conveys an acceptance of the person's current level of
self-disclosure. According to Rogerian theory, such acceptance and understanding on the part of the interviewer are necessary for therapeutic change to occur. Consequently, Rogerian theory would suggest that the reflection and paradoxical conditions would be more effective than the attention control condition in the conveyance of personal choice and responsibility and the promotion of self-acceptance. In accordance with Rogers' theory, it is hypothesized that the reflection and paradoxical conditions will promote significantly more self-acceptance than the attention control condition.

In comparison with the probing condition, the attention control condition would provide the person with considerably less structure and pressure during the interview. Although the attention control condition would not provide the person with the necessary conditions for therapeutic change. Rogers' theory would suggest that no interviewer response would be less harmful than the type of responses given by the interviewer in the probing condition (Rogers, 1951). Festinger's theory also would suggest that the attention control condition would result in more self-acceptance than the probing condition but for different theoretical reasons. According to Festinger's theory, the attention control subject would experience a greater perception of choice over self-disclosure than would the probing subject, which would result in more self-acceptance. In accordance with Festinger's theory, this
study hypothesizes that the attention control condition will promote significantly more self-acceptance than the probing condition.

Festinger and Rogers both have theorized about the role of anxiety in the process of self-acceptance. According to Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, anxiety occurs when a person becomes aware of an inconsistency between cognitions and self-concept which cannot be ignored or attributed to external factors. This anxiety serves as a catalyst for the person to change the discrepant cognition, so that anxiety is reduced and psychological consistency between cognitions and self-concept is reestablished. If the individual is not aware of an inconsistency or if the inconsistency can be disregarded or discounted, then he or she will not experience anxiety. Because the experience of anxiety is contingent upon the perception of an unavoidable discrepancy, Festinger's theory would predict that the attention control condition would produce the greatest amount of anxiety, whereas the probing condition would produce the least amount of anxiety. The reflection and paradoxical conditions would produce an amount of anxiety that is less than that produced by the attention control condition but more than that produced by the probing condition.

According to Rogers' theory of personality, anxiety occurs when an incongruence between a person's experiences and self-concept is approaching symbolization in awareness. This
anxiety arouses defense mechanisms that either distort or deny such discrepant experiences, thereby maintaining the individual's consistent perception of self. The potential for this anxiety cannot be eliminated until the person broadens the self-concept to include these experiences as legitimate parts of himself or herself. Given the absence of an accepting and understanding interviewer, Rogers' theory, like Festinger's, would predict that the attention control condition would produce the greatest amount of anxiety when compared with the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions. Consequently, the present study hypothesizes that the attention control condition will produce significantly more anxiety than the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions.

With respect to the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions, Rogers' theory would lead to predictions about anxiety that would differ from those stemming from Festinger's theory. According to Roger's theory, the reflection and paradoxical responses would suggest more acceptance of the person's current level of self-disclosure than the probing responses. Consequently, Rogers' theory would predict that the reflection and paradoxical conditions would produce less anxiety than the probing condition.

With respect to differential predictions about anxiety in the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions, this study states the null hypothesis and interprets the results in light of their support for one of these two theories.
Therefore, this study hypothesizes that there will be no significant differences among the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions in the amount of anxiety produced.

**Method**

**Subjects**

The study used 48 males and 76 females from undergraduate psychology classes at North Texas State University and Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. The subjects were recruited by asking for persons willing to talk about their sexual thoughts. They were told that this was a study of people's personal thoughts about sex. Volunteers were asked to sign a release form (Appendix A) which indicated that they agreed to participate in the pretesting prior to the study. Following the signing of the release form, each subject completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the trait portion of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Subjects who participated in the study received extra credit on their course work.

**Experimenters**

Three male and three female experimenters were used as interviewers in this study. All interviewers had completed at least 1 year of advanced psychotherapy practicum prior to the study. Each interviewer received 9 hours of training before the study to ensure accuracy and uniformity in the implementation of the experimental procedures. An additional means of ensuring procedural uniformity and accuracy involved
the use of an additional experimenter who was employed to randomly select and review one third of the audio tapes made of the interviewers. This experimenter, who was blind as to the conditions on the tapes, familiarized himself with the training scripts and then listened to the recordings to identify the conditions and verify that they paralleled the scripts. All of the reviewed tapes were identified correctly.

Instruments

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Speilberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1969) has two forms: the state measure (Appendix C) and the trait measure (Appendix D). The state portion of this instrument was used to assess the situational feelings of anxiety immediately after the interview. The trait portion was given prior to treatment, for use in controlling individual differences. Both forms consist of 20 self-report questions on anxiety. The median correlation between the two forms for males is .47 and .30 for females. The reliability measures are based on internal consistency with alphas ranging from .83 to .92. The validity of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was established concurrently with the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale \( r = .80 \) and the Affect Adjective Checklist \( r = .54 \). Scoring of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory consists of assigning numerical values from 1 to 3 to the ratings of each statement. These numerical values are summed to yield the subject's state- or trait-anxiety score. The higher scores are indicative of higher anxiety. The maximum
score on either portion of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory is 60 points.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix E) is a Likert-type scale consisting of 10 items (Rosenberg, 1965). This is a self-administered instrument which measures an individual's basic feelings of self-worth or self-esteem. By definition, self-esteem reflects global feelings or general affect about oneself which are fairly stable over time. In the present study, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure self-acceptance, which is a dimension of the larger category of self-esteem. Thus, this instrument provides more of a global or trait measure of self-evaluation following self-disclosure. The instrument also was given prior to the interviews, for use in controlling individual differences.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale originally was developed as a measure of self-esteem for a study of high-school students but has found substantial use in other age groups as well (Atchley, 1976; Ward, 1977). In comparison with other self-esteem measures, this instrument stands out as having profitted from a substantial amount of attention to scale development and psychometric evaluation. A test-retest reliability coefficient of .85 is reported (Rosenberg, 1965). Face validity was established through empirical validation of the predictions that people with low self-esteem scores (a) appear depressed to others and express feelings of discouragement and unhappiness, (b) manifest symptoms of
"neuroticism" or anxiety; (c) hold a low sociometric status in a group, and (d) command less respect than others and feel that others have little respect for them. In scoring the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, numerical values from 1 to 4 are assigned to the ratings of each statement. These numerical values are summed to yield the subject's self-esteem score. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. The maximum score is 40 points. In this study, the self-esteem score was used to represent a global measure of self-acceptance.

The Subject Comfort Questionnaire (Appendix F) was constructed, through the use of the Semantic Differential Technique (Osgood, 1957), to measure self-acceptance of disclosures immediately following the interview. This instrument consists of one question followed by a series of bipolar adjectival items to which the subject responds. Although the psychometric properties of this particular stimulus set have not been researched, the adjectives employed were selected from Osgood's original work on the Semantic Differential Technique (the Evaluative factor) and from the Gough and Heilbrun (1965) Adjective Checklist. Scoring of the Subject Comfort Questionnaire begins with the assignment of numerical values from 1 to 7 to the ratings of each item. These item values are summed and divided by the total number of items to yield a subject's self-acceptance score. The higher the score, the greater the self-acceptance. The maximum score is seven.
Procedure

When the subjects arrived to participate in the experiment, they were screened for previous sexual trauma. Persons with any history of incest, rape, or any other sexual trauma were not allowed as subjects. At this point, subjects were randomly assigned to one of the six possible interviewers and then seen individually. Each subject read a written explanation of the experiment which stated that the subject would be asked to talk about his or her sexual fantasies to an interviewer. The subject then was asked to sign an informed consent agreement (Appendix G).

At this time, the subjects received one of the three experimental conditions or the attention control condition (viz., reflection, probing, paradoxical, or the attention control condition). In each of these four conditions, five statements were used to provide a similar structure for the interviews. The statements were (a) "Okay, now, I would like you to take a few moments and think of your most common sexual fantasy, so that we can begin discussing it"; (b) "Okay, let us begin by considering the times when you experience this fantasy"; (c) "Let us consider the characters involved in your fantasy"; (d) "Let us consider the activities taking place during your fantasy"; and (e) "Let us consider your personal feelings before, during, and after the fantasy."

At times of resistance or hesitation, the reflecting interviewer behavior was characterized by the act of
paraphrasing the content spoken by the subject. For example, "I hear you saying . . ." or "It sounds like you feel . . ." (Appendix H). The probing interviewer behavior was characterized by its singularity of demand, a simple statement reflecting the initial instructions. For example, "Can you tell me more?"; "You do not need to feel embarrassed"; or "Go ahead" (Appendix I). The paradoxical interviewer behavior was characterized by a dual message, reminding the subject of the directions requested but instructing the subject to continue what he or she was currently doing. For example, "I do not want you to tell me anything that you do not want to"; "It is okay to be careful"; or "I'm glad you are taking your time" (Appendix J). In the reflection, probing, and paradoxical conditions, there was a minimum of four interviewer responses characteristic of that condition. Information given was responded to with reflection in all three experimental conditions. The difference between conditions was the treatment of resistance. Resistance was defined as hesitation or changing the focus away from self-disclosure of sexual fantasies. Resistance was met by a reflection, paradoxical, or probing response.

In the attention control condition, the subjects were given a copy of the five structured statements and then asked to record their responses into a tape recorder. An interviewer was in the room during this time but did not attend to the subject other than to issue and collect the materials.
All sessions were approximately 15 to 20 minutes in length. At the close of the session, the subjects were given the state portion of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Subject Comfort Questionnaire.

Following the completion of this information, the subjects were debriefed. They were asked about their feelings and thoughts about the procedure, in order for the interviewers to identify and respond to any possible adverse reactions from the experience. Additionally, the interviewers carefully explained the purpose of the experiment, which included an understanding of the fact that sexual fantasies are normal and positive occurrences. They also reminded the subjects that all information disclosed was confidential.

**Design and Statistics**

One hundred and twenty-four subjects were randomly distributed among the three experimental conditions and the attention control condition. In a 2 X 4 factorial design, the two-factor dimension was the interview condition (viz., reflection, paradoxical, probing, and attention control). The attention control interview condition was included as a means of examining the potential reactive effects of self-disclosure, the dependent measures, and subject extra course credit on the dependent measures of the study.
The analysis of the three dependent measures was computed, using analysis of covariance within a 2 X 4 factorial design. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was given after treatment as the dependent measure of self-acceptance. The pretreatment administration of this instrument was used as the covariate. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (state portion) was given after treatment as the dependent measure for anxiety. The pretreatment administration of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (trait portion) was used as the covariate. The third dependent measure, the Subject Comfort Questionnaire, also was used to measure self-acceptance and had only a single posttreatment administration. A Pearson product-moment correlation was computed, using the scores from the Subject Comfort Questionnaire and the pretreatment scores from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, to determine whether the latter's scores would be used as the third covariate. The Pearson product-moment correlation revealed a significant correlation between the two sets of scores, \( r = .25, p < .05 \). Consequently, an analysis of covariance was used with the scores from the Subject Comfort Questionnaire.

Additional statistical analysis was conducted to compare the effects of subject and interviewer sex on each of the three dependent measures. A 2 X 2 X 4 factorial design was employed in which one two-factor dimension was the subject sex, the other two-factor dimension was the interviewer sex, and the four-factor dimension was the interview condition.
This additional statistical analysis was performed in order to assess whether the gender of the subject or the interviewer was influential in determining the subject's evaluation of the interview experience (see Table 1).

Results

The means and standard deviations for the dependent measures, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Subject Comfort Questionnaire, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory are given in Table 2. Separate analyses of covariance and Duncan multiple range tests are listed in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

The analysis of covariance on the means of the scores from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale indicates, first of all, that there are no significant main effects for the interventions, $F(3, 107) = .97, p < .41$. Secondly, the analysis of covariance on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale reveals no significant difference between the means of the male and female subjects, $F(1, 107) = 2.23, p < .97$. Lastly, the results indicate no significant two-way interaction between the interview condition and the sex of the subject, $F(3, 107) = 2.23, p < .09$. Thus, in terms of interview condition, subject sex, or interview condition by subject sex, subjects did not significantly differ in the degree of self-acceptance immediately following the interview, as reflected by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

The analysis of covariance on the Subject Comfort Questionnaire reveals significant group differences,
$F(3,107) = 4.08, p < .009$. A Duncan multiple range test indicates that the means of the subject scores from the probing, paradoxical, and reflection conditions are significantly greater than the mean of the subject scores from the attention control condition. The Duncan test also indicates that the mean of the subject scores from the probing condition is significantly greater than the means of the subject scores from the paradoxical and reflection conditions. There is no significant difference between the mean of the paradoxical condition and the mean of the reflection condition. The analysis of covariance on the Subject Comfort Questionnaire reveals no significant difference between the means of the male and female subjects, $F(1,107) = .15, p < .70$. The results also indicate no significant two-way interaction between the interview condition and the sex of the subject, $F(3,107) = .36, p < .78$.

Thus, the data analysis of the Subject Comfort Questionnaire indicates that subjects in the three experimental conditions expressed significantly more self-acceptance immediately following the interview than did subjects in the attention control condition. Subjects in the probing condition demonstrated significantly more self-acceptance than did subjects in the paradoxical and reflection conditions. Subjects in the paradoxical and reflection conditions were not significantly different with respect to self-acceptance. With respect to subject sex or interview
condition by subject sex, subjects did not significantly differ in the degree of self-acceptance immediately following the interview.

The analysis of covariance on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory indicates significant differences for the interview conditions, $\text{F}(3,109) = 3.12, p < .03$. A Duncan multiple range test indicates that the mean of the subject scores from the attention control condition is significantly greater than the means of the subject scores from the probing, paradoxical, and reflection conditions. The Duncan test also indicates that the mean of the subject scores from the probing condition is significantly greater than the means of the subject scores from the paradoxical and reflection conditions. There is no significant difference between the means of the subject scores from the reflection and paradoxical conditions. The analysis of covariance on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory indicates no significant difference between the means of the male and female subjects, $\text{F}(1,109) = .18, p < .67$. The results also reveal no significant two-way interaction between the interview condition and the sex of the subject, $\text{F}(3,109) = .10, p < .96$.

Thus, the data analysis of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory indicates that subjects in the attention control condition expressed significantly more situational feelings of anxiety than did subjects in the probing, reflection, and paradoxical conditions. Subjects in the probing condition
expressed significantly more anxiety than did subjects in the paradoxical and reflection conditions. With respect to subject sex or interview condition by subject sex, subjects did not significantly differ in their situational feelings of anxiety immediately following the interview.

The analyses of covariance comparing the effects of subject and interviewer sex on each of the three dependent measures reveals no significant differences within the four groups. Thus, the gender of the subject or the interviewer is not a significant influence, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Subject Comfort Questionnaire, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, in the interview experience. The separate analyses of covariance for each of the dependent measures are listed in Table 1.

Discussion

The results of this research provide mixed evidence for the general hypothesis that the reflection, paradoxical, and probing interview techniques have differential effects on self-acceptance following personal self-disclosure in an interview. Unlike the reflection technique, the probing and paradoxical techniques previously have not been studied with respect to their subsequent effects on self-acceptance. Thus, this study is the first to evaluate and provide evidence for the differential effects of these techniques. The results confirm the hypothesis that the reflection and paradoxical techniques do not differ from one another in terms of their
effect on self-acceptance. Furthermore, it is confirmed that both the reflection and paradoxical techniques produce more self-acceptance when compared with an attention control condition. The hypothesis that the probing condition produces the least amount of self-acceptance is not supported. Instead, the results indicate that the probing technique produces the greatest amount of self-acceptance following self-disclosure.

In contrast to the significant results from the Subject Comfort Questionnaire, data from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale reveal no significant differences in self-acceptance among the four interview conditions. In an effort to understand this discrepancy, it is recalled that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale originally was constructed to assess an individual’s basic feelings of self-worth or self-esteem. By definition, self-esteem reflects global feelings or general affect about oneself which are fairly stable over time (Berytspraak & George, 1979). "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," is a statement which is characteristic of the items on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Even though this instrument is a measure of self-esteem, it is used in conjunction with the Subject Comfort Questionnaire to measure self-acceptance in the present study. Self-acceptance, by definition, is a dimension of the larger category of self-esteem and specifically involves a person's assessment of and ability to accept certain things about himself or herself (Rogers, 1951). As a means of explicitly assessing
self-acceptance, the **Subject Comfort Questionnaire** requests that the subject respond to the question, "How do you feel about having talked about the things you did to the interviewer?" Although both instruments are employed to measure self-acceptance, the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** provides more of a global or trait measure, whereas the **Subject Comfort Questionnaire** provides a situational or state measure of self-evaluation. Consequently, it is expected that the **Subject Comfort Questionnaire** is sensitive to situational changes in self-acceptance, whereas the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** is not.

The results from the **State-Trait Anxiety Inventory** (state) indicate that the attention control condition produces the greatest amount of situational anxiety, when compared with the three experimental conditions. The probing technique produces a moderate amount of anxiety, whereas the reflection and paradoxical techniques produce only a slight amount of anxiety. These results support both Festinger's and Rogers' positions that the attention control condition produces more anxiety than the reflection, probing, and paradoxical conditions. With respect to differences among the reflection, paradoxical, and probing conditions, the results also support Rogers' position that the reflection and paradoxical responses produce less anxiety than probing responses. According to Rogerian theory, the reflection and paradoxical responses suggest an acceptance of the person's current level of
self-disclosure which, in turn, is conducive to a change in self-acceptance and a reduction in anxiety. Probing responses, on the other hand, suggest an unacceptance of the person's current level of self-disclosure which, in turn, is not conducive but rather somewhat antagonistic to changes in self-acceptance.

Even though the reflection and paradoxical responses produce less anxiety than the probing responses, the results of the Subject Comfort Questionnaire indicate that these techniques also produce less self-acceptance. In other words, the probing technique produces more anxiety, as well as self-acceptance, when compared with the reflection and paradoxical techniques. Rogerian theory states that the external pressure and structure of the probing technique interfere with the necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic change. Consequently, Rogers asserts that the probing technique is anxiety provoking without being conducive to positive changes in self-acceptance. Contrary to Rogers' theory of therapeutic change, the results suggest that the probing interview structure and its subsequent level of subject anxiety do not necessarily interfere with changes in self-acceptance. In fact, under the features of this study, the probing technique is more effective in the promotion of self-acceptance than the reflection or paradoxical techniques.

In support of Rogers' theory of therapeutic change, the results indicate that reflection and paradoxical responses
produce more self-acceptance than the attention control procedure. With respect to Rogers' theory of personality change, this suggests that the presence and participation of an interviewer are necessary components of the change process. When the results of the reflection, paradoxical, and attention control conditions are viewed in conjunction with the results of the probing condition, however, it appears that the presence of an accepting and understanding interviewer is sufficient, but not necessary, for therapeutic changes in self-acceptance.

In an effort to further assess and understand the present results, it is recalled from cognitive dissonance theory that the process by which an individual incorporates discrepant material into his or her self-concept begins with an awareness of an inconsistency among personal attitudes or cognitions. A discrepancy of this sort produces a state of dissonance and anxiety which, in turn, motivate the person to resolve the discrepancy. The way in which the person decreases the anxiety is not always determined by the objective facts of the situation but, instead, involves either the alteration of one of the conflictual cognitions or the attribution of the cognitions to some compelling external pressures or reasons.

Research in the area of cognitive dissonance concludes that the way in which an individual reduces anxiety is a function of the manipulated stimulus conditions under which
the behavior is evoked, as opposed to the actual behavior in which he or she engages. In brief, if the manipulated stimulus condition provides sufficient external motivation for engaging in behaviors that are discrepant with personal beliefs, the individual experiences little or no anxiety and no attitude change. Instead, the person attributes the discrepant behavior to the external reasons (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). On the other hand, when the manipulated stimulus condition provides the individual with the choice to engage in discrepant behaviors, he or she experiences a significant amount of anxiety and, subsequently, a change in attitude toward the discrepant behavior (Cohen & Latane', 1962).

With respect to the present study, the four interview conditions request that the subject engage in self-disclosure of information which is considered to be extremely personal and difficult to divulge (Kaplan, 1974). Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance suggests that the structure of the interview condition within which self-disclosure is evoked, as opposed to the act of self-disclosure, is the responsible agent for changes in anxiety and self-acceptance. Thus, the experimental task is designed to determine whether the three experimental conditions and the attention control condition have differential effects on anxiety and self-acceptance. Independent of group membership, all subjects are instructed to perform the same behavioral task of self-disclosure. Given the suspected innocuous role of the subject's behavioral
task in the change process, it is assumed that subject production of information is the same across the four conditions. Furthermore, if subject production is not the same across the four groups, it is assumed that this dimension is not an influential or critical factor in the change process.

The four interview conditions vary in the extent to which they structure the subject's interview behavior. In light of Festinger's theory, the dimension of interview structure appears to be a critical variable for the assessment and understanding of the results. Both the reflection and paradoxical conditions require the subject to choose the extent to which he or she discloses to the interviewer, thus, providing the person with very little external structure or pressure during the session. Similar to the reflection and paradoxical conditions, the attention control condition provides the subject with very little external pressure to disclose and, thus, also requires the subject to choose the degree to which he or she self-discloses. Given the absence of the interviewer's participation during the session, the attention control condition provides even less external structure and pressure than the reflection and paradoxical conditions. In comparison with these three techniques, the probing condition provides the subject with considerably more external structure and pressure to self-disclose during the session.

According to Festinger's theory, an interview condition which is conducive to external attributions for subject
behavior promotes little or no anxiety. Little or no anxiety, in turn, produces no changes in self-acceptance. On the other hand, an interview condition which is conducive to internal attributions for subject behavior promotes high anxiety and, consequently, significant changes in self-acceptance. Festinger's theoretical model appears to suggest the presence of a linear relationship between the interview structure and subject anxiety. More specifically, the probability of subject anxiety increases as the interview structure provides the subject with more internal, as opposed to external, motivation for self-disclosure (see Figure 1). Festinger's model also suggests the presence of a linear relationship between subject anxiety and self-acceptance. The probability of self-acceptance increases as the amount of anxiety increases (see Figure 2). Lastly, his model suggests the presence of a linear relationship between interview structure and self-acceptance. The probability of self-acceptance increases as the interview structure provides the subject with less external structure and pressure to self-disclose (see Figure 3).

Based on Festinger's theory, subjects in the probing condition experience the least amount of anxiety and, consequently, the least amount of change in self-acceptance. Subjects in the attention control condition experience the greatest amount of anxiety and, in turn, the greatest amount of change in self-acceptance. Subjects in the reflection
and paradoxical conditions experience an amount of anxiety, as well as self-acceptance, that is greater than that experienced by subjects in the probing condition but is less than that experienced by subjects in the attention control condition.

In contrast to predictions based on Festinger's theory, the present results suggest that both Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance and linear model are inadequate for understanding the relationships among interview structure, subject anxiety, and self-acceptance. Instead, the results suggest that the relationships among these three variables are understood better in terms of a curvilinear model. With respect to interview structure and subject anxiety, the results suggest the presence of a curvilinear relationship. As the amount of structure decreases across the four conditions (probing, reflection, paradoxical, and attention control), there is a decrease, followed by an increase in subject anxiety (see Figure 4). When the four conditions are compared, subjects in the probing condition experience moderate amounts of anxiety. Subjects in the reflection and paradoxical conditions experience the least amount of anxiety, and subjects in the attention control condition experience the greatest amount of anxiety.

With respect to subject anxiety and self-acceptance, the results also suggest the presence of a curvilinear relationship. As the amount of anxiety increases across the four
conditions (reflection, paradoxical, probing, and attention control), there is an increase, followed by a decrease in self-acceptance (see Figure 5). A comparison of the four conditions reveals that subjects in the reflection and paradoxical conditions experience the least amount of anxiety and demonstrate only a slight increase in self-acceptance. Subjects in the probing condition experience moderate amounts of anxiety and demonstrate the largest increase in self-acceptance. Subjects in the attention control condition experience the greatest amount of anxiety but demonstrate the smallest increase in self-acceptance.

With respect to interview structure and self-acceptance, the results support the idea of a linear relationship which, nevertheless, is in direct opposition to the relationship based on Festinger's model. In contrast to Festinger's theory, the results indicate that as the amount of structure decreases across the four conditions (probing, reflection, paradoxical, and attention control), there is a decrease in self-acceptance (see Figure 6). When the four conditions are compared, subjects in the probing condition experience the greatest amount of self-acceptance. Subjects in the reflection and paradoxical conditions experience a moderate amount of self-acceptance, and subjects in the attention control condition experience the least amount of self-acceptance.

In general, the present results suggest that subject anxiety may be a better predictor of changes in
self-acceptance than the interview condition in which self-disclosure is evoked. Furthermore, it is the subjects in the probing condition who experience the greatest amount of self-acceptance, despite their opportunity to attribute dissonance-producing behaviors to the demands of the interviewer. In looking at the results, there appears to be a relationship between anxiety and self-acceptance which is similar to the established relationship between anxiety and learning. Thus, research which investigates the effects of anxiety on learning provides a basis from which the present results can be understood further.

In brief, research on anxiety and learning concludes, first of all, that a curvilinear relationship exists between anxiety and learning (Byrne, 1966; Spence, 1964; Taylor, 1953). More specifically, there are optimal levels of anxiety for learning, and either too little or too much anxiety interferes with learning. Secondly, the effects of anxiety on learning depend on the stage of the learning process. Generally, it is found that anxiety will debilitate performance in early learning, whereas later in learning, anxiety is less likely to hinder performance, and it may even facilitate performance in learning (Lekarczyk & Hill, 1969; Spielberger & Smith, 1966). Thirdly, there is an interaction between anxiety and task difficulty, in that the optimal level of anxiety for a learning assignment decreases with the increasing difficulty of the task (Broadhurst, 1959).
With respect to psychotherapy, anxiety often is considered to be an important variable in the change process (Garfield & Bergin, 1979). Clients frequently are assessed in terms of the degree to which they are motivated or anxious to change. Little or no anxiety, with regard to one's condition, is believed to interfere with change because of the insufficient amount of motivation which it provides. An extreme amount of anxiety also is perceived to interfere with the change process because it psychologically immobilizes the client and, thus, greatly reduces his or her ability to think and participate in the psychotherapeutic process at that time. Consequently, as in the area of anxiety and learning, it is suggested that there are levels of anxiety which are more conducive than others to the promotion of psychotherapeutic change (Crowder, 1972; Lachar, 1947; Nichols, 1974; Solomon & Berzon, 1972).

As previously mentioned, the results of the present study suggest the presence of a curvilinear relationship between the level of anxiety and the amount of self-acceptance experienced following self-disclosure (see Figure 5). A middle range of anxiety appears to be associated with the largest amount of self-acceptance. The interview conditions which produce either a small amount (viz., reflection and paradox) or a large amount (viz., attention control) of subject anxiety are not as conducive to the promotion of self-acceptance as the interview condition which produces
a moderate amount of anxiety (viz., probe). The results also indicate that the interview condition (viz., probe) which provides the subject with considerable external structure and pressure to disclose is the most effective method of eliciting moderate amounts of anxiety (see Figure 4).

In an effort to understand why the probing interview condition is the most conducive to the promotion of self-acceptance, it is recalled from the learning research on anxiety that the optimal level of anxiety for learning is dependent on the task difficulty. Furthermore, the optimal level of anxiety is dependent on the stage of the learning process. In the present study, the experimental task requires the subject to recall and then disclose his or her most common sexual fantasy. This particular task is used in an effort to simulate the psychotherapy situation in which the client is encouraged to disclose information that often is very personal and difficult to divulge. Independent of any resistance to or discomfort with self-disclosure, the process of disclosing information about one's most common sexual fantasy predominantly involves a search through memories in an effort to select and recall familiar information. Thus, from a learning point of view, the experimental task is fairly simple, in that it does not require the subject to engage in a complex learning process. Given the rather simple cognitive demands of the experimental task, the learning research on anxiety suggests that an interview
technique which increases subject anxiety will facilitate, as opposed to hinder, the selection and recall behaviors of this task.

Because of the structure and pressure which the probing interview condition places upon the subject to self-disclose, this method of interviewing appears to be an effective way to promote a moderate amount of anxiety. If, indeed, subject anxiety is related to changes in self-acceptance, the results suggest that the moderate amount of anxiety produced by the probing condition is optimal or the most conducive for change.

With respect to the promotion of self-acceptance, the results also suggest that the reflection and paradoxical conditions produce too little subject anxiety, whereas the attention control condition produces too much. In the case of the reflection and paradoxical conditions, the subject is not pressured to disclose but, instead, is given complete control over the degree to which he or she divulges information during the interview. The results suggest that such permissiveness in the interview is conducive to the promotion of very low levels of subject anxiety. The attention control condition provides the subject with the greatest amount of personal choice or control over his or her interview behavior. In comparison with results from the reflection and paradoxical conditions, it appears that the extreme lack of attention control interview structure in the fact of discussing an emotionally laden topic results in extremely high levels of
anxiety. In turn, such extreme levels of subject anxiety are associated with little or no changes in self-acceptance. Thus, in the present study, neither of these three conditions are as effective as the probing condition in the promotion of self-acceptance.

The degree to which the present results can be used to make predictions about client anxiety and self-acceptance in psychotherapy depends largely upon how well the experimental task simulates a psychotherapy session. As previously mentioned, the present experimental task is used in an effort to simulate the psychotherapy situation in which the client is encouraged to recall and disclose highly personal, but familiar, information. First of all, discussing one's sexual fantasies to an interviewer more than likely evokes similar resistance and discomfort when compared with a client's reactions to self-disclosure in psychotherapy. Secondly, independent of any resistance, the present experimental task appears to make cognitive demands similar to those encountered by the client in the previously mentioned psychotherapy situation. More specifically, disclosing information about one's most common sexual fantasy predominantly involves a search through memories in an effort to select and recall highly personal, but familiar, information. Likewise, the process of disclosing highly personal and familiar information in psychotherapy involves the same or similar cognitive behaviors. Consequently, in light of the learning research
concerning anxiety, the present study can be useful in making sound predictions about client anxiety and self-acceptance in a psychotherapy interview.

A potential limitation of the present results stems from the observation that client self-disclosure in psychotherapy often involves more than just the recall of familiar thoughts and feelings. At times, the therapist wants to encourage the discovery and exploration of thoughts and feelings of which the client may be unaware or unable to spontaneously recall at that time (e.g., insight). When the client is involved in such a complex and active discovery process, it appears, from a learning point of view, that the psychotherapeutic task is more difficult than the experimental task of the present study. According to the learning research on anxiety, the optimal level of anxiety for a learning task decreases with the increasing difficulty of the task. With respect to the promotion of self-acceptance, this suggests that the optimal level of anxiety during insight may be less than that which is optimal during recall.

According to the present study, a probing interview technique is the most effective way to promote self-acceptance when the person is engaged in the factual recall of personal information. When the interview involves or requires more active processing of thoughts or feelings, the probing technique may be too anxiety provoking and, consequently, hinderance to both the discovery process and the client's
self-acceptance. Because the reflection and paradoxical interview techniques appear to be less anxiety provoking, these two techniques may be more conducive to client exploration and self-acceptance in the more difficult interview situations. Future research, utilizing a more cognitively complex experimental task, is needed to investigate the relationships among interview structure, anxiety, and self-acceptance as they apply to client exploration and insight.

An additional potential limitation of this study involves the possibility of a subject selection bias. More specifically, individuals are recruited on a volunteer basis. Those individuals who chose to participate in the study may differ in their level of motivation and willingness to discuss personal issues from those individuals who chose not to be involved. In terms of the present subject population and its comparability to a client population in psychotherapy, this suggests the potential for motivational differences that may limit the generalizability of the present results. Future research which employs subjects from a client population or evaluates the presence of motivational differences among nonclient subjects is needed to help clarify this issue.

In conclusion, the results of the present study provide mixed evidence for the differential effects of the reflection, paradoxical, and probing interview techniques upon subject anxiety and self-acceptance. The results suggest that the
relationships among interview structure, anxiety, and self-acceptance are better understood in terms of a curvilinear model, as opposed to Festinger's linear model. In brief, there appears to be a curvilinear relationship between the interview structure and subject anxiety. A curvilinear relationship also appears to exist between subject anxiety and self-acceptance. In general, the results suggest that there is a relationship between anxiety and self-acceptance which is similar to the established relationship between anxiety and learning. The probing interview technique produces a moderate amount of anxiety which appears to be an optimal level for changes in self-acceptance. Compared with the other interview conditions, subjects in the probing condition experience the greatest amount of self-acceptance, despite the potential for them to attribute any dissonance-producing behaviors to the demands of the interviewer. Thus, in contrast to Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, it appears that anxiety may be a better predictor of changes in self-acceptance than the interview condition in which self-disclosure is evoked. Further research is suggested to clarify whether the present results will generalize to experimental tasks or interview situations that engage the individual in more complex learning processes or interview behaviors.
Appendix A

Informed Consent Agreement

NAME OF SUBJECT: ________________________________________________________________

1. These research forms are being used to further our knowledge in the area of self-concept. There should be no harm whatsoever in completing these forms.

2. I hereby give consent to Elizabeth Robertson to use the two forms I am filling out for research purposes only. I understand that this information is confidential and that my name will be removed from these instruments after they are organized together.

3. I have seen a clear explanation and understand the nature and purpose of the procedure, as well as the discomforts involved, and the possibility of complications which might arise. I have seen a clear explanation and understand the benefits to be expected. I understand that the procedure to be performed is investigational and that I may withdraw my consent for status. With my understanding of this and having received this information and satisfactory answers to the questions I have asked, I voluntarily consent to the procedure designated in paragraph 2 above.

DATE

SIGNED: ____________________________________________

SUBJECT

SIGNED: ____________________________________________

WITNESS
Appendix B

Subject Demographic Questionnaire

NAME: ______________________ YEAR MARRIED: ______________________
AGE: ______________________ NUMBER OF CHILDREN: ______
SEX: ______________________

How comfortable do you feel about talking of sexual matters? (check one)

Extremely ______________________ Very ______________________ Moderately ______________________
comfortable, comfortable, comfortable,
I can talk I can talk I can talk
with anyone. with many with a few
people.

Uncomfortable, Very
I only speak uncomfortable, I do not speak
with a special with people
person or two. about sex.

Who do you talk with about sexual matters (if friends, how many)? ______________________

How many brothers did you have while growing up? ______
How many sisters did you have while growing up? ______
How many brothers or sisters were older than you? ______
**State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (State)**

NAME: ___________________________________________ AGE: _______ SEX: __________

**DIRECTIONS:** A number of statements which people use to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement carefully and decide how you feel **right now**. Then put an X on the line in front of the word or phrase which best describes how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement. Remember, find the word or phrase which best describes **how you feel right now, at this very moment.**

1. I feel ... ___very calm ___calm ___not calm
2. I feel ... ___very upset ___upset ___not upset
3. I feel ... ___very pleasant ___pleasant ___not pleasant
4. I feel ... ___very nervous ___nervous ___not nervous
5. I feel ... ___very jittery ___jittery ___not jittery
6. I feel ... ___very rested ___rested ___not rested
7. I feel ... ___very scared ___scared ___not scared
8. I feel ... ___very relaxed ___relaxed ___not relaxed
9. I feel ... ___very worried ___worried ___not worried
10. I feel ... ___very satisfied ___satisfied ___not satisfied
11. I feel ... ___very frightened ___frightened ___not frightened
12. I feel ... ___very happy ___happy ___not happy
13. I feel . . . ___very sure ___sure ___not sure
14. I feel . . . ___very good ___good ___not good
15. I feel . . . ___very troubled ___troubled ___not troubled
16. I feel . . . ___very bothered ___bothered ___not bothered
17. I feel . . . ___very nice ___nice ___not nice
18. I feel . . . ___very terrified ___terrified ___not terrified
19. I feel . . . ___very mixed-up ___mixed-up ___not mixed-up
20. I feel . . . ___very cheerful ___cheerful ___not cheerful
State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Trait)

NAME: ____________________________ AGE: ______ DATE: ______

DIRECTIONS: A number of statements which people use to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and decide if it is hardly ever, sometimes, or often true for you. Then for each statement, put an X in the space in front of the word that seems to describe you best. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement. Remember, choose the word which seems to describe how you usually feel.

1. I worry about making mistakes.... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
2. I feel like crying.............. ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
3. I feel unhappy............... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
4. I have trouble making up my mind. ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
5. It is difficult for me to face my problems............... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
6. I worry too much.............. ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
7. I get upset at home.......... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
8. I am shy...................... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
9. I feel troubled............... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
10. Unimportant thoughts run through my mind and bother me........... ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
11. I worry about my work........ ___hardly ever ___sometimes ___often
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I have trouble deciding what to do</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I notice my heart beats fast</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am secretly afraid</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I worry about my family</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My hands get sweaty</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I worry about things that may happen</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. It is hard for me to fall asleep at night</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I get a funny feeling in my stomach</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I worry about what others think of me</td>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

NAME: _______________________

For each of the following statements, indicate whether you (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c) agree, or (d) strongly agree. Please circle only one alternative for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At times, I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. All in all, I am inclined to feel I am a failure.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I take a positive attitude toward myself.
Appendix F

Subject Comfort Questionnaire

NAME: ____________________________

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following questions by placing a check mark in the spaces which best describe your feelings.

Here is how you are to use these scales:

If you feel that your feelings are very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your check mark as follows:


OR


If you feel that your feelings are quite closely related to one end or the other end of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your check mark as follows:


OR


If your feelings seem only slightly related to one side, as opposed to the other side (but are not really neutral), then you should check as follows:


OR


If you feel both sides of the scale equally represent your feelings or if the scale is completely irrelevant to the way you are feeling, then you should place your check mark in the middle space:


The direction toward which you check depends upon which of the two ends of the scale seem most characteristic of your feelings.
IMPORTANT: Place your check marks in the middle of spaces, not on the boundaries:

THIS NOT THIS


Be sure you check every scale, do not omit any. Never put more than one check mark on a single scale. Work at a fairly high speed throughout. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feelings" about the items, that we want. On the other hand, please do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.

How Do You Feel About Having Talked About the Things You Did to the Interviewer?

Appendix G

Informed Consent Agreement II

NAME OF SUBJECT: ____________________________

1. I hereby give consent to Elizabeth Robertson to tape record and to perform the following investigational procedure:

This is an experiment investigating sexual fantasies. We know that sexual fantasies are positive and normal occurrences for well-adjusted teenagers and adults. What we wish to discover about sexual fantasies are the similarities of the details and the ways which are most effective to help people talk about them. Therefore, we will be asking you to talk about one of your sexual fantasies. We also will be asking you to fill out a few forms about yourself and your experience in this experiment.

While we understand that this is uncomfortable for some people, we and the university believe that it will not cause you harm and that the scientific gains are important. It is important that you understand that this information that you will be giving us will be confidential and that your name will be removed from any record associated with your activities in this experiment.

2. I have seen a clear explanation and understand the nature and purpose of the procedure, as well as the attendant discomforts or risks involved and the possibility of complications which might arise. I have seen a clear explanation of and understand the benefits to be expected. I understand that the procedure to be performed is investigational and that I may withdraw my consent for status. With my understanding of this and having received this information and satisfactory answers to the questions I have asked, I voluntarily consent to the procedure designated in Paragraph 2 above.

DATE ____________________________

SIGNED: ____________________________
SUBJECT ____________________________

SIGNED: ____________________________
WITNESS ____________________________
Appendix H

Reflection Condition

Reflective Listening

The interviewer's overriding emphasis in the reflection condition is to encourage the subject to self-disclose by paraphrasing the content spoken by the subject. It is preferable to use words which are sufficiently different from the subject's, so that the subject does not regard the reflection of content as "parrotting" his or her behavior.

While the subject is quiet or hesitant, the experimenter (E) is also quiet. The experimenter responds with warmth and caring, as in all conditions.

Training Script

A. Greeting

The interviewer (INT) introduces self and thanks the subject (S) for coming. The interviewer greets the subject with a warm handshake and directs the subject to the interviewing room. The interviewer follows with the opening.

B. Recording

INT: "Now before we begin talking, I would like to take a few notes as we go along, and I would like to record our interview. This recording will only be used for the purpose of this study, and it will be confidential. You will not be identified by name in any of our research reports." (Interviewer starts the recorder.)
C. **Rationale**

INT: "As you know, __________, the purpose of this study is to learn more about people's personal thoughts about sex. In particular, we are interviewing people to learn as much as we can about their most common sexual fantasy. This is a relatively new research area. So far, we do know that sexual fantasies are a common part of everyone's experience. What we would like to discover is whether the details of people's fantasies are similar or different. It is important that you understand that a sexual fantasy is just a mental image or scene associated with sex that you find very stimulating. Okay, now, I'd like you to take a few moments and think of your most common sexual fantasy, so that we can begin discussing it."

(Pause for 30 seconds.)

D. **Probing Set**

INT: "Now, with the 20 minutes we have together, I'd like you to tell me as much as you can about your sexual fantasy and for you to go into as much detail as possible. From time to time, I'll present you with some general areas for discussion. I realize that some of the features about the fantasy will be difficult or embarrassing for you to talk about. However, it's important that you tell me as much as you can about your fantasy."

E. **Present Topic Area**

INT: "Okay? Then let's begin by considering the times when you experience this fantasy."

(Interviewer reflects the content disclosed by the subject.)
S: "Well, I'm not sure. I guess my fantasy occurs in the evening."

E: "So you've noticed having this particular fantasy at night."

S: "Yes, I guess usually when I'm in bed."

E: "After you've gone to bed?"

-----------

S: "I'm not sure who the woman is."

E: "It's hard to be certain."

S: "Yes, I'm just not sure."

(Silence)

S: "It's a tall woman."

E: "The woman's pretty tall."

S: "Yes, uh-huh."

(Silence)

S: "She has blonde curly hair."

E: "So she looks like she could have hair that's blond and curly."

At the prescribed times, the interviewer presents, in this order, the remaining topic areas.

1. "Let's consider the characters involved in your fantasy."

2. "Let's consider the activities taking place during your fantasy."

3. "Let's consider your personal feelings before, during, and after the fantasy."
F. Closure and Exit

After the prescribed time has elapsed for exploring the last topic area, the interviewer moves to closure and then directs the subject to the testing room to complete the dependent measures.

INT: "Okay, our time is up. I want to thank you for participating in this study; your contribution has been helpful to us. Now, before you leave today, I'd like you to complete some questionnaires in our testing room. This should take only a few more minutes of your time. If you're ready, I'll escort you now to the testing room."
Appendix I

Probing-Paraphrasing Condition

The interviewer's overriding emphasis in this condition is to encourage the subject to self-disclose and to elaborate as completely as possible on these disclosures. To achieve this objective, interviews will employ both probing and paraphrasing responses. "Probing" is defined as direct questions and requests for clarification or elaboration; "paraphrasing" is defined as an appropriate rewarding of the client's self-disclosure.

Critical to this condition is the interviewer's orientation to the subject's reluctance to self-disclose. Interviewers should respond to observed hesitation by encouraging more disclosures and by reassuring the subject that he or she can overcome his or her hesitation. In short, any reluctance on the subject's part to disclose or to elaborate should be countered with some type of probing remark. Hesitating subjects in this condition will be reminded that the interview time is limited and that there is a need to gather as much subjective data as possible during this period. Detailed disclosures should be actively encouraged, while hesitation (or forms of resistance to disclose) should be actively discouraged.

In this condition, as in the paradoxical condition, some standard areas for discussion will be identified by the interviewer at different points during the interview. The interviewer will spend a prescribed amount of time on each
before moving on to the next area. In the probing condition, this time will be spent with the interviewer paraphrasing while actively probing and eliciting more specific client self-disclosure.

Training Script

A. Greeting

The interviewer (INT) introduces self and thanks the subject (S) for coming. The interviewer greets the subject with a warm handshake and directs the subject to the interviewing room. The interviewer follows with the opening.

B. Recording

INT: "Now, before we begin talking, I would like to take a few notes as we go along, and I would like to record our interview. This recording will only be used for the purpose of this study, and it will be confidential. You will not be identified by name in any of our research reports. (The interviewer starts the recorder.)

C. Rationale

INT: "As you know, __________, the purpose of this study is to learn more about people's personal thoughts about sex. In particular, we are interviewing people to learn as much as we can about their most common sexual fantasy. This is a relatively new research area. So far, we do know that sexual fantasies are a common part of everyone's experience. What we would like to discover is whether the details of people's fantasies are similar or different. It is important
that you understand that a sexual fantasy is just a mental image or scene associated with sex that you find very stimulating. Okay, now, I'd like you to take a few moments and think of your most common sexual fantasy, so that we can begin discussing it." (Pause for 30 seconds.)

D. Probing Set

INT: "Now, with the 20 minutes we have together, I'd like you to tell me as much as you can about your sexual fantasy and for you to go into as much detail as possible. From time to time, I'll present you with some general areas for discussion, and I'll try to help you to be as specific as you can in describing these areas. I realize that some of the features about the fantasy will be difficult or embarrassing for you to talk about. However, it's important that you try to ignore or somehow overcome these feelings so that you can tell me as much as you can about your fantasy."

E. Present Topic Area

INT: "Okay? Then let's begin be considering the times when you experience this fantasy."

(Interviewer actively encourages subject to disclose as much content as possible. Probing questions and requests for clarification should predominate.)

Examples:

"Would you tell me more about that?"

"Can you be more specific?"

"When was the most recent time you had this fantasy?"

"How frequently do you experience this fantasy?"
When the subject appears to hesitate or become "stuck," the interviewer should respond by acknowledging the difficulty and then requesting that the subject make a greater effort to disclose.

INT: "You seem to be hesitating. . . . I know that this may be difficult for you to talk about, but it is important that you be more specific (give me more details, try harder to remember, etc.)."

Any and all disclosures pertaining to fantasies should be paraphrased and followed by additional probes for more information. (The interviewer does not identify the next topic area until the prescribed amount of time has elapsed.)

Examples:

INT: "So one of the things you think about is (X). . . . Would you tell me more about this?"

Extended subject pauses or hesitations should be confronted with:

INT: "I'd really appreciate it if you would try to tell me as much as you can."

At the prescribed times, the interviewer presents, in this order, the remaining topic areas.

1. "Let's consider the characters involved in your fantasy."
2. "Let's consider the activities taking place during your fantasy."
3. "Let's consider your personal feelings before, during, and after the fantasy."
Appendix I--Continued

F. Closure and Exit

After the prescribed time has elapsed for exploring the last topic area, the interviewer moves to closure and then directs the subject to the testing room to complete the dependent measures.

INT: "Okay, our time is up. I want to thank you for participating in this study; your contribution has been helpful to us. Now, before you leave today, I'd like you to complete some questionnaires in our testing room. This should take only a few more minutes of your time. If you're ready, I'll escort you now to the testing room."
Appendix J

Paradoxical-Paraphrasing Condition

The interviewer's overriding emphasis in this condition is to encourage the subject to self-disclose by directing him or her to withhold from disclosure any and all material that he or she is not yet prepared to relate. To achieve this objective, subjects will not be directly asked to disclose but will be asked to consider (privately) what material they would like to discuss and what they would prefer to withhold. Disclosed material will be paraphrased.

Critical to this condition is the interviewer's orientation to the subject's reluctance to self-disclose. Interviewers should respond to observed hesitation by encouraging it as an "appropriate" response that should be "accepted" and utilized as a "means" of facilitating meaningful self-disclosure. Hesitating subjects in this condition will be reminded to take as much time as they need to decide how much they will self-disclose; they will be advised to "go slow." Probing responses will be avoided; subjects will not be directly asked to elaborate. Rather, subjects will be directed to engage in hesitation until they feel ready to disclose.

In this condition, as in the probing condition, some standard areas for discussion will be identified by the interviewer at different points during the interview. The interviewer will spend a prescribed amount of time on each area before
moving on to the next area. In the paradoxical condition, this time will be spent with the interviewer paraphrasing while encouraging subject hesitation in self-disclosure.

Training Script

A. Greeting

The interviewer (INT) introduces self and thanks the subject (S) for coming. The interviewer greets the subject with a warm handshake and directs the subject to the interviewing room. The interviewer follows with the opening.

B. Recording

INT. "Now before we being talking, I would like to record our interview. This recording will only be used for the purpose of this study, and it will be confidential. You will not be identified by name in any of our research reports."

(The interviewer starts the recorder).

C. Rationale

INT: "As you know, ________, the purpose of this study is to learn more about people's personal thoughts about sex. In particular, we are interviewing people to learn as much as we can about their most common sexual fantasy. This is a relatively new research area. So far, we know that sexual fantasies are a common part of everyone's experience. What we would like to discover is whether the details of people's fantasies are similar or different. It is important that you understand that a sexual fantasy is just a mental image or scene associated with sex that you find very stimulating."
Okay, now, I'd like you to take a few moments and think of your most common sexual fantasy, so that we can begin discussing it. (Pause for 30 seconds.)

D. Paradoxical Set

INT: "Now, with the 20 minutes we have together, I'd like you to tell me only as much as you're ready to tell me about your sexual fantasy. From time to time, I'll present you with some general areas for discussion. Personally, I would prefer that you withhold any information that you're not ready to tell me. I realize that some of the features about your fantasy may be difficult or embarrassing for you to talk about. When you experience these feelings, it's important that you respect them and that you engage in hesitation instead of fighting it. I've found that when people fight their natural instincts, they're less likely to tell me about what they're thinking.

E. Present Topic Area

INT: "Okay? Then, let's begin by considering the times when you experience this fantasy."

(The interviewer does not directly encourage the subject to disclose any content, but rather advises the subject to take time and "go slow." The interviewer simply paraphrases any disclosed remarks.)

"Now take your time. I expect you to be hesitant."

"Keep withholding until you feel ready to go on."

"Be only as specific as you're ready to be."
When the subject appears to hesitate or become "stuck," the interviewer should respond by directly encouraging the subject to continued hesitating and to "withhold" until ready. 

INT: "You seem to be hesitating. . . . Good. Don't fight it. . . . Let whatever comes, come naturally."

Any and all disclosures should be paraphrased but NOT followed with any probes for additional information. (The interviewer does not identify the next topic area until the prescribed amount of time has elapsed.)

INT: "So one of the things you think about is (X). . . . All right, you don't need to tell me anymore about this until you're ready."

Extended subject pauses should be directly acknowledged as necessary to meaningful self-disclosures.

INT: "Take as much time as you need to decide what you can talk about and what you can't. . . . You'll be the first to know when you're ready to say something."

At the prescribed times, the interviewer presents, in this order, the remaining topic areas.

1. "Let's consider the **characters** involved in your fantasy."
2. "Let's consider the **activities** taking place during your fantasy."
3. "Let's consider your **personal feelings** before, during, and after the fantasy."

F. **Closure and Exit**

After the prescribed time has elapsed for exploring the last topic area, the interviewer moves to closure and directs
the subject to the testing room to complete the dependent measures.

INT: "Okay, our time is up. I want to thank you for participating in this study; your contribution has been helpful to us. Now, before you leave today, I'd like you to complete some questionnaires in our testing room. This should only take a few more minutes of your time. If you're ready, I'll escort you now to the testing room."
## Appendix K

### Table 1

Summary of Analyses of Covariance for Subject and Interviewer Sex Effects

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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Sex</td>
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<td>.027</td>
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<tr>
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<p>| <strong>Subject Comfort Questionnaire</strong>           |    |     |      |
| Subject Sex                                 | 1  | .001| .001 |
| Interviewer Sex                             | 1  | 2.868| 2.280|
| Interview Condition                         | 2  | .500 | .397 |
| Two-Way Interactions of Subject Sex and Interviewer Sex | 1  | .724| .576 |</p>
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</table>

| State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (State)                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|-------|
| Subject Sex                                                          | 1  | 47.66 | 1.278 |
| Interviewer Sex                                                      | 1  | 1.443 | .039  |
| Interviewer Condition                                                | 2  | 26.946| .722  |
| Two-Way Interactions of Subject Sex and Interviewer Sex              | 1  | .578  | .015  |
| Two-Way Interactions of Subject Sex and Interview Condition          | 2  | 1.661 | .045  |
| Two-Way Interactions of Interviewer Sex and Interview Condition      | 2  | 60.450| 1.621 |
| Three-Way Interactions of Subject Sex, Interviewer Sex, and          | 2  | 33.894| .909  |
| Interview Condition                                                  |    |       |       |
| Error                                                                | 16 | 37.298| ----  |

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01
Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Condition</th>
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<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Means</th>
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Table 2--(Continued)

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Table 2--(Continued)

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Note.  
\( ^a \) Maximum score = 40.  
\( ^b \) Maximum score = 40.  
\( ^c \) Maximum score = 7.  
\( ^d \) Maximum score = 60.  
\( ^e \) Maximum score = 60.
Appendix M

Table 3

Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Data

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Note. *p < .05; **p < .01
### Table 4
Summary of Duncan Multiple Range Test

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<td>.86*</td>
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</table>

**Note.** *p < .05*
Appendix 0

Figure 1. Festinger's theoretical linear relationship between interview structure and anxiety.
Figure 2. Festinger's theoretical linear relationship between anxiety and self-acceptance.
Figure 3. Festinger's theoretical linear relationship between interview structure and self-acceptance.
Figure 4. Apparent curvilinear relationship between interview structure and anxiety.
Figure 5. Apparent curvilinear relationship between anxiety and self-acceptance.
Figure 6. Apparent linear relationship between interview structure and self-acceptance.
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Meador, B. D. Individual process in a basic encounter group. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1971, 18, 70-76.


Rogers, C. R., & Truax, C. B.  The relationship between patient intrapersonal exploration in the first sampling interview and the final outcome criterion.  *Brief Research Reports, Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute, University of Wisconsin,* 1962, 73, 35-44.


