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EFFECTS OF NOTE-TAKING ON SELF-DISCLOSURE
AMONG PRISONERS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Denton, Texas

December, 1989

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Lowrey, Kimberly D., Effects of Note-Taking on Self-Disclosure Among Prisoners. Master of Science (Clinical Psychology), December, 1989, 47 pp., 2 tables, references, 47 titles.

The effects of note-taking on self-disclosure during a clinical interview among prisoners were investigated. Participants consisted of 60 male and female inmates incarcerated in a minimum security prison. Subjects within each gender were randomly assigned to either high note-taking, low note-taking or no note-taking conditions. Subjects were asked to discuss intimate information during an interview while varying levels of notes were taken.

Self-disclosure was assessed using items from the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank. A 3 x 2 ANOVA was conducted. No significant main effects were found. However, a significant interaction was found. Further analysis revealed that females in the high note-taking condition disclosed less than females in the no note-taking condition. Some theoretical and clinical implications are suggested.

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EFFECTS OF NOTE-TAKING ON SELF-DISCLOSURE
AMONG PRISONERS

Note-taking is a relatively common practice among psychologists. Psychologists not only take notes about background information, but also more personal information. This practice is especially common during initial intake interviews in which background information is recorded.

Previous research has indicated that certain behaviors of the therapist affect clients' attitudes. For example, studies have demonstrated that therapists who smoke are viewed less positively by their clients (Schneider, 1985). Similarly, clients perceptions appear to be adversely affected by therapists' use of profanity (McIlvain, 1978), by therapists' attire (Kerr & Dell, 1976) and by therapists' lack of eye contact (Barak, Patkin & Dell, 1982). Such studies concerning clients' attitudes have been undertaken due to the finding that positive impressions of therapists by clients increase their effectiveness as agents of change (Dorn, 1986).

However, one area which has not been explored extensively is the effect of note-taking on clients' willingness to disclose intimate information. In view of the prevalence of the practice of note-taking, it seems desirable to investigate the possible effects it may have.

The merits of note-taking have been a source of disagreement among therapists. Some therapists consider note-taking to be detrimental to the therapeutic process. In contrast, others have maintained that taking notes during an initial interview has no adverse effect upon either the client's perception of the therapist or their willingness to provide intimate information. Freud contended that note-taking during the session makes an unfavorable impression on clients, impedes the attention of the therapist, and is generally not necessary in most situations (Rieff, 1977). The distracting nature of note-taking is further addressed by Edinburg, Zinburg and Kelman (1975) and MacKinnon and Michels (1971). Sullivan (1970) disapproved of note-taking for purposes other than the collection of social data, maintaining that clients are less able to talk openly when written records are being kept. Similarly, Langs (1979) opposes note-taking of any kind as it implies violations of privacy and confidentiality and precludes a secure therapeutic relationship. Finally, some therapists maintain that the practice may cause clients to focus more on topics that elicit note-taking (Seligman, 1986; MacKinnon & Michels, 1971).

One of the strongest proponents of note-taking is Benjamin, who describes the practice as "an integral part

of the interviewing process" (Benjamin, 1987). Benefits include refreshing the therapist's memory, facilitating professional discussions of cases, and providing a means of self-monitoring in order to aid the therapist in professional development. He states further that clients may interpret lack of note-taking as indifference. Leon (1982) also approves of note-taking. He maintains that clients expect a certain amount of record-keeping and that, when properly explained, the practice need not adversely affect clients' perceptions. It is generally assumed that the promise of confidentiality is an essential ingredient in inducing people to reveal important and intimate information to a therapist. A study by Woods and McNamara (1980) investigated this question by means of an interview analogue. Undergraduates were administered a standardized interview composed of items requiring various levels of intimate responding under conditions that promised confidentiality, nonconfidentiality, or no expectation of confidentiality. Individuals receiving the promise of confidentiality were more open in the disclosure than those given nonconfidentiality instructions. To the extent that note-taking, regardless of reassurance by the interviewer, may imply nonconfidentiality, it would seem as if this variable may effect the extent to which individuals are willing to disclose.

The debate on the merits of note-taking has been supported by relatively little systematic research. Hickling, Hickling, Sison and Radetsky (1984) used videotapes of simulated clinical interviews to assess clients' perceptions of therapy with and without note-taking. Their results indicate that therapists who do not take notes are rated higher on effectiveness, client reactions to the session and total therapeutic impact, suggesting that note-taking is indeed detrimental to the therapeutic process.

Correlates of Self-Disclosure

One area in which note-taking may play a major role is in the client's willingness to disclose. This may be especially critical if the client is asked to discuss sensitive information. In a study by Miller, Ingham, Plant and Miller (1977) the relationship between self-disclosure and alcohol consumption was investigated. Among abstainers and moderate drinkers it was found that self-disclosure increased with increased levels of alcohol consumption for both men and women. However, among heavy drinkers self-disclosure tended to be somewhat lower.

The positive relationship between self-disclosure and mental health has been commonly espoused in both theory and practice. Among the dominant white population, the relationship has received some empirical support. Within

the black population, this relationship has received somewhat less empirical scrutiny. In a study by Duckro, Duckro and Beal (1976) the relationship between self-disclosure and three facets of diminished mental health among black college females were examined. The variable of anxiety was significantly related to self-disclosure in the direction opposite to that predicted by the theory of self-disclosure.

In a study conducted by Lombardo and Fantasia (1976) the hypothesis that a high level of self-disclosure is indicative of psychological adjustment and self-actualization was tested. The Self-Disclosure scale, Social Avoidance and Distress, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Alienation and Repression-Sensitization scales were administered to 60 subjects. The results for all scales indicated that a high level of disclosure was associated with adjustment as measured by these scales. A second group of 94 subjects completed the Self-Disclosure scale and the Personal Orientation Inventory, a measure of self-actualization. The results indicated that high disclosers compared to low disclosers had achieved a higher level of self-actualization. That is, there were significant correlations between self-disclosure and measures of self-actualization such as Time Competence, Internal Support, Existentiality, Self-Acceptance and Capacity for Intimate Contact.

Jourard (1964) has postulated a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and mental health. Too much or too little self-disclosure suggests relatively poor psychological adjustment. Strassberg and Kangas (1977) designed a study to examine some psychological adjustment correlates of self-disclosure within a population of psychiatric inpatients. Self-disclosure scores derived from a sentence completion test were correlated with MMPI performance for 25 male and 25 female adult psychiatric inpatients. Greater self-disclosure by female patients was found to be associated with higher elevations on Sc, Pt, and Si. High levels of disclosure by male patients were associated with higher levels on D and Pt and lower levels on Ma. These results suggest the possibility of an inverse relationship between self-disclosure and adjustment within a relatively disturbed population.

Johnson and Dabbs (1976) conducted a study in which 72 subjects answered questions of low, moderate, and high intimacy value at one of three distances from an experimenter who either adopted a neutral manner, induced liking, or disclosed about himself. Argyle and Dean's "distance-equilibrium" hypothesis was supported. When answering questions of low and moderate intimacy value, subjects placed in close proximity to the experimenter spent significantly less time self-disclosing than did

subjects placed further away. Further, subjects exposed to the positive affect induction, who reported increased liking for the experimenter, disclosed no more than subjects in the neutral condition, and the effect of distance was independent of the relationship effect. The results suggest that modeling, rather than liking or "distance" facilitated self-disclosure, and Jourard and Friedman's assertion that subjects who liked the experimenter would disclose more when distance was reduced was called into question.

In another study Davis and Sloan (1974) found that interviewee disclosure was strongly facilitated by disclosure on the part of the interviewer, but was sustained at a high level only if the interviewer continued to disclose. Davis and Sloan also found that deep disclosures by interviewees showed somewhat greater originality of content than more shallow disclosures. These results suggested that the facilitating effect of the interviewer's self-disclosure was best interpreted in terms of social exchange theory rather than in response disinhibition or discriminative cuing terms.

Shapiro and Swensen (1977) hypothesized that the amount of self-disclosure in a dyadic interaction would be a function of self-concept level and subject gender. High self-concept of both genders disclosed more than low self-

concept individuals. Thelen and Brooks (1976) predicted that high-social-desirability subjects would make more positive statements about themselves than low-social-desirability subjects but there would be no difference in level of self-disclosure. Additionally, because of a high need for social approval, it was predicted that high-social-desirability subjects would be influenced by modeled self-disclosure, whereas their low-social-desirability counterparts would not be influenced by modeled self-disclosure. The subjects consisted of 60 male undergraduates divided into three treatment conditions of: positive disclosure model, negative disclosure model, and no model. Based on the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, equal numbers of high and low scorers were assigned to the three conditions. Results indicated that high-social-desirability subjects in the no model condition failed to demonstrate a higher level of self-disclosure. However, as predicted, high-social-desirability subjects in the positive model condition made significantly more positive self-references and a lesser percentage of negative self-references than high-social-desirability subjects in the negative model conditions. No differences between conditions were obtained for low-social-desirability subjects. Analysis of the data on level of self-disclosure revealed that subjects in the negative

model condition were significantly more disclosing than subjects in the positive model condition or subjects in the no-model condition.

Allen (1974) asked the question, "When does exchanging personal information constitute self-disclosure?" Sixty pairs of undergraduate males were paired. One of each pair then interviewed the other about sexual experience. Four measures of self-disclosure were obtained: respondents' questionnaire scores, experimenter's ratings of respondents' behavioral self-disclosure, respondents' post-interview self-ratings of self-disclosure, and interviewers' ratings of respondents' self-disclosure. Respondents sexual experience and sex guilt were also measured. No significant relationship among interviewers' and experimenters' self-disclosure ratings were found. However, respondents' self-disclosure questionnaire scores were positively correlated with their self-ratings. The authors conclude that exchanging personal information cannot be equated with "self-disclosure," and that interpersonal factors determine when such communication will be perceived as "self-disclosure."

Self-Disclosure and Gender Differences

Various factors seem to effect the extent to which individuals will disclose to others. One variable which has been found to consistently effect self-disclosure are

gender differences. Stokes, Fuehrer, and Childs (1980) conducted a study in which male and female college students reported their willingness to self-disclose about 14 topics to each of three same-gender target persons: a stranger, an acquaintance, and intimate friend. An interaction of gender by the target person, demonstrated that males are more willing than females to disclose to strangers and acquaintances. Also females are more willing than males to disclose to intimate friends. These results suggest a tendency for men to avoid emotional intimacy with one another. Competition among men and homophobia were suggested as explanations for this lack of intimacy among men.

Similarly, Pearson (1980) studied the relationship between sex-roles and self-disclosure. Women and men enrolled in a large midwestern university, completed the Bem Sex-role Inventory and the Self-Disclosure Situations Survey. Based upon scores on the femininity and masculinity scales of the Bem, participants were separated into three groups of low, moderate, or high on masculinity as well as low, moderate, or high on femininity. No significant differences in the total self-disclosure of men and women were found. However, masculine women self-disclosed more total information than women low in masculinity and women low in masculinity and women high in

masculinity differed significantly in their self-disclosure. Also, feminine men self-disclosed more extensively than men low in femininity. Men high in femininity make more total disclosures than men who are moderate in femininity and make more total disclosures than men low in femininity. Pearson concluded that sex roles appear to provide a more accurate predictor of self-disclosure than biological sex. Previous conflicting findings on self-disclosure may be a result of ignoring sex roles, an apparently important mediating variable.

In a study by Chelune in 1976 the roles of sex and target differences in behavioral samples of disclosure were examined using a multidimensional procedure for five major parameters: amount, intimacy, rate, affective manner of presentation, and self-disclosure flexibility. Females did not disclose a greater percentage of information than males but did disclose more intimate information and at a higher rate than did males. Significant differences in affective manner of presentation and rate of disclosure were also demonstrated between interview conditions. The multidimensional assessment of disclosure in terms of basic parameters seemed to allow a more meaningful and systematic explanation of the effects of independent variables upon self-disclosure within the context of specific relationships and settings than previous single dimensional approaches.

Self-Disclosure and Ethnic Differences

Differences in the level of self-disclosure has been found between blacks and whites. Specifically, researchers report that whites typically disclose more than blacks (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958; Dimond & Hellkamp, 1969).

However, Jaffee and Polansky (1962) studied the self-disclosure patterns of both lower class blacks and lower class whites and found no differences. This suggests that racial differences may be due to social class factors.

Self-Disclosure and Situational Variables

The situation or context in which an individual is interviewed seems to effect the extent to which an individual is willing to discuss intimate information. For example, Kent (1975) devised two situations consisting of the presence or absence of others. Undergraduate females were then asked to disclose personal feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. Individuals in the absence of others disclosed more than females interviewed in the presence of others. Overall, the situation variable explained the greatest portion of variance in the discomfort and negative disclosure criteria. However, females with lower expectancies of favorable outcome were more guarded and reluctant to disclose personal information and feelings than those with higher expectancies, especially in the interpersonal situation. They also took longer to respond

to the questions and reported more discomfort and dislike for the task.

A study by Williams (1974) investigated two models of counseling to determine which best facilitates self-disclosure and trust in black college students. It was hypothesized that persons participating in a peer counseling experience will trust and self-disclose at a higher level than persons participating in a professional counseling experience. One model involved professional counselors; the other consisted of minimally trained peer counselors. Participants were systematically assigned to one of the two models and given five 60 minute counseling sessions with either a professional or a peer counselor. Results did not support the hypothesis. Both groups disclosed and trusted at a significantly higher level after treatment.

Self-Disclosure and Counselor Differences

It is generally agreed that characteristics and behaviors of the interviewer affects client behavior. Hoffman-Graff (1977) conducted a study designed to explore the relationship between interviewers' use of positive versus negative self-disclosure on interviewees' perceptions of the interviewer and of their own behavior. Results indicated that: a) interviewers who disclosed negative information about themselves were perceived as significantly

more empathic, warm, and credible than interviewers who disclosed positive information about themselves; b) subjects interviewed by a negatively disclosing interviewer indicated that they procrastinated significantly less after the interview than before while the opposite was true for subjects in the positive disclosure condition; and, c) no significant differences were found as a function of interviewer-subject sex pairings.

Feigenbaum (1977) also hypothesized that therapist self-disclosure affects the intimacy of self-disclosure of interviewees. Male and female college subjects were interviewed individually by a male graduate student, using standardized interviews. Intimacy of subjects' self-disclosures during the interviews was investigated in relation to interviewing style (reflecting versus disclosing), seating arrangement (presence or absence of intervening desk), sex of subject, and the temporal sequence of the interview. Results showed significant correlations between intimacy of therapist self-disclosure, as measured by judges' content ratings of the interviews and subjects' use of self-referent words. Intimacy of self-disclosure did not differ significantly as a function of sex or seating arrangement but increased significantly over time in response to both reflecting and self-disclosing comments by the interviewer.

In addition to differences between counselors, gender differences between interviewer and interviewee have also been found to effect the extent to which participants are willing to share intimate information. Brooks (1974) obtained 40 male and 40 female college students who were rated on self-disclosure in interviews with either male or female interviewers of high or low status. It was found that: a) males disclosed more to females and females disclosed more to males; b) dyads containing a female resulted in more disclosure than all male dyads; c) males revealed more to high status interviewers while females disclosed more to low status interviewers; and (d) high- as opposed to low-status male interviewers elicited more disclosure from all subjects, while status of female interviewers resulted in no significant differences.

Suspiciousness Among Inmates

It seems reasonable to expect that note-taking would especially affect the extent to which highly suspicious individuals are willing to disclose. No studies are available specifically exploring the willingness of suspicious individuals to disclose. However, the validity of the MMPI Pd and Pd+.4K scales to discriminate levels of social deviance among young black men was investigated in a study by Elion and Megargee (1975). The first study established that black

inmates at a federal correctional institution had significantly higher scores on both scales than culturally deprived black university students. The second study demonstrated that among the inmates, recidivists had significantly higher scores than first offenders and that among the students, there were significant differences in the expected directions among subgroups differing in self-reported delinquency. The third study showed that the black subjects had higher scores than comparable samples of white subjects. It was concluded that the Pd and Pd+.4K both validly differentiate levels of social deviance among young black men but that the norms for the scales appear to show racial bias. Kingsley (1960) designed a study to test the following hypothesis: Are MMPI scales, with particular reference to Pd, Welsh's Anxiety Index (AI) and Internalization Ratio (IR), significantly higher in psychopaths than in a matched group of non-psychopathic prisoners compared to non-incarcerated "normal" controls? Prisoner groups were matched individually for age and education with 50 enlisted men who gave no history of crimes. Seven of the MMPI scales significantly differentiated these two groups. The prisoner population studied may be described as possessing hostile tendencies, somatic complaints, paranoid ruminative worries, and as socially withdrawn. Thus, these findings indicate that

prisoners tend to be more suspicious and less revealing than non-prisoners. The findings by Elion and Megargee (1975) and Kingsly (1960) have been replicated by other investigators. For example MMPI protocols of all male and female prisoners in the North Carolina Correctional System in 1971 were compared by Joesting, Jones, and Joesting (1975). Females inmates had significantly higher IQs than did the males. With the exception of the Ap, L, and K scales, males had statistically significant higher means on all MMPI scales. Women were only higher on the Ap and K scales. These results not only indicate that suspiciousness is common among incarcerated prisoners, but gender differences exist. More specifically, males tend to be more suspicious than females. Rosenblatt and Pritchard (1978) suggest that racial differences on the MMPI do not occur in all racial comparisons, but instead, are restricted to low IQ groups. They performed multiple discriminant analysis of MMPI scores between high IQ white, high IQ black, low IQ white, and low IQ black subjects which yielded two significant cononical variates.

Megargee and Carbonell (1985) investigated the degree to which eight MMPI scales specifically derived to assess correctional criteria related to six criteria of subsequent adjustment in prison. In addition, the scales were tested for racial bias. The eight scales used were Pantou's

Adjustment to Prison-Revised, Religious Identification, Homosexuality, Habitual Criminalism, and Parole Violation; Beall and Pantan's Escape; Clark's Recidivism; and Wattron's Prison Maladjustment. Subjects were 1,214 inmates at a federal correctional institution who were admitted over a two year period. Although some statistically significant correlations with the criteria were obtained, their magnitude was quite low, indicating the scales had little practical usefulness. Further, comparisons of black and white subsamples did not indicate that any of the scales are more or less valid for one racial group.

Type of Crime

Although differences in level of suspiciousness have been found as a function of gender and ethnic differences among prison inmates, the type of crime committed apparently is unrelated to suspiciousness. In a study by Adams (1976) six MMPI scales were investigated in an attempt to isolate significant differences between imprisoned multiple and first offenders. The Pd scale of the regular MMPI clinical scales and five additional scales (Es, Re, Pr, Ap, HC) that have been found of value in prison settings were evaluated. The two groups were controlled for age and IQ and also reflected the appropriate racial composition. No significant differences

in the overall group profiles were found, however, three scales did differentiate significantly between the first and multiple offenders. The groups presented significant differences on Pd, Ap, and HC; the multiple offenders scored in the higher direction. These differences imply that the multiple offenders tend to have more of an antisocial pattern than first offenders, and they probably will present more prison adjustment difficulties or disciplinary problems.

Using a sample of 65 prison inmates, the incidence of violent crimes for persons with the 4-3 MMPI profile type and with other two-point code types was compared in a study by Buck and Graham (1978). The results failed to replicate the findings of some earlier investigators who reported that violent behaviors are more common for persons with the 4-3 profile type. The failure to identify a significant relationship between the 4-3 profile type and violent behavior suggests that caution should be exercised in generalizing to populations that differ from those in which the relationship between violence and the 4-3 profile type is established.

MMPI responses of 1,313 prison inmates in a study by Pantan (1958) revealed a distinct prison population profile which may be employed to give added knowledge of prison population variations in personality profiling as compared

to the profile of people in general. However, no major differences between the profiles of six major crime classification groups were found. Similar findings have been reported by Scott (1980). The MMPI was administered to a sample of 168 minimum security incarcerated female felons. Escapees scored significantly higher than non-escapees on scales F, Pd, Pt, Sc, and Ma and significantly lower on the L scale. In addition, female escapees were significantly younger and more often imprisoned as a juvenile than non-escapees. However no significant differences between the two groups with respect to IQ, educational level, sentence length, number of adult incarcerations, psychiatric hospitalizations or children were found. The lack of differences in personality, including level of suspiciousness, would seem to suggest that the frequency of incarcerations and the type of crime is not a salient variable to consider when exploring willingness to disclose.

Summary and Hypotheses

A relatively common practice among psychologists is note-taking, especially during intake interviews. However, differences of opinion exist over whether this is an appropriate practice. Some authors maintain that clients expect professionals to take notes and failure to do so suggests that the interviewer is not interested in the

client and thereby adversely affecting the clients behavior. Others have proposed that note-taking effects the clients' willingness to share information because taking notes increases the risk of loss of confidentiality.

Previous research has shown that self-disclosure is affected by a variety of factors including gender differences between the interviewer and interviewee, interviewer-interviewee ethnic differences, willingness of the interviewer to self-disclose, situational variables, and intimacy of the content of the interview topic.

In addition to the above, it seems plausible that clients who are suspicious would be less willing to disclose than less suspicious clients. Previous research has relatively consistently demonstrated that prisoners are more suspicious than non-prisoners. Therefore, it seems reasonable that taking notes in the process of interviewing prison inmates would be especially inhibiting to the extent to which they self-disclose. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of note-taking among both male and female prisoners. It is hypothesized that prisoners asked to talk about intimate topics while notes are being taken will disclose less than those who are asked to discuss important topics while notes are not being taken. A main effect of gender is also hypothesized. More specifically,

it is proposed that female inmates asked to talk about intimate topics will disclose more than male inmates.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 30 adult white female inmates and 30 adult white male inmates who were incarcerated in a minimum security federal prison. All participants were randomly selected from a list of volunteers.

Measures

Fifteen items from the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank (Rotter, et al., 1949) were used to assess participants' level of self-disclosure. Those sentence stems which did not provide a pronoun or include a reference to a belief, emotion or action were selected (see Appendix A). The criteria for selection was first described by Doster et al. (1977). These sentences were then scored for level of self-disclosure using the Disclosure Rating Scale (Doster, 1972; Doster & Strickland, 1971). This rating scale is a 7-point descriptively anchored rating scale with higher ratings representing greater self-exploration and personal communication. Previous studies using the Disclosure Rating Scale report significant Pearson product-moment correlations between raters ranging from .73 to .93. Additionally, participants

were asked to complete a biographical questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Interviewers

Interviewers were two female students who have completed graduate courses in psychological assessment and interviewing techniques. In addition, both interviewers have completed at least one year of practicum training.

Procedure

Half of the participants of each gender were randomly assigned to one of the following three groups: 1) High Note-Taking; 2) Low Note-Taking; and, 3) No Note-Taking. While all participants in the High Note-Taking Condition were talking, two pages of notes were written by the interviewer. While participants in the Low Note-Taking Condition were talking, one page of notes was taken during the interview. Finally, for participants in the No Note-Taking group no notes were written during the one-half hour interview. Within each group, half of the participants of each gender were interviewed by one interviewer and the other half by the other interviewer. Previous studies exploring interview variables upon clients have utilized 30 minute sessions (see Bass, 1987 for a review). Therefore, participants in this study will be interviewed for 30 minutes.

Each participant in both note-taking conditions was greeted by the interviewer, escorted to an empty room, and given the following instructions:

Hi, my name is _____ and I am currently helping a student with her Master's thesis. We are currently in the process of doing two things. First, we are interested in learning more about why you are in prison and whether you feel as if you have been treated fairly. Therefore, I would like you to spend the next half-hour talking about what led up to your being sent to prison and your opinion about whether you feel this was fair. While you are talking, I will be taking notes so that I can remember what you said after we have finished. However, I can assure you that what you say will be held in strict confidence.

A second purpose of this project is to get some information about your feelings about this interview. So, after we are finished with the interview, I will ask you to fill out some questionnaires. Since you are being asked to talk about what you may think is a sensitive topic, you may withdraw from this study now if you wish without any penalty. Do you have any questions? Good. Now please tell me about what occurred which resulted in your being sentenced to prison and your opinions about this matter.

Participants in the No Note-Taking condition were given the same instructions with the following exception. That is, the last two sentences in the first paragraph of the instructions were deleted. Every five minutes while participants in the High Note-Taking Condition are talking, the interviewer wrote one paragraph consuming approximately one-third of an 8 1/2 x 11 lined sheet of paper. For the Low Note-Taking Condition one paragraph of notes were written after every ten minutes of the interview had elapsed. In the Non Note-Taking Condition no notes were taken during the entire interview. If an interviewee asked the interviewer what was being written or asked to see a copy of the notes, the interviewer responded by saying that the notes are personal and are simply some brief information to help the interviewer remember what was said. After these instructions were given to each participant, those who agreed to participate in the study were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C). All questions from participants regarding what they should talk about were answered by saying: "Talk about whatever you like" or similar ambiguous answers. Following the interview, each participant was asked to fill in the Rotter Incomplete Sentences and the biographical questionnaire.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Prior to exploring the hypotheses of the study, comparability of the groups was explored. The mean age of the participants was 40.63 with a range of 20 to 73 years. Fifty two percent of the sample were classified as not married, i.e. single, divorced, or separated and 48 percent were married. Although questions regarding occupation, education and income were compiled these findings are not being reported as all participants, being incarcerated, were unemployed and lacked an income.

Statistical Analysis

It was hypothesized that prisoners asked to talk about intimate topics while notes were being taken would disclose less than those in the no note-taking condition. The means and standard deviation scores may be found in Table 1. To investigate this hypothesis a 3 (No, Low, and High Note-Taking) x 2 (Male and Female) ANOVA was conducted. No significant differences were found as a function of the level of note-taking, $F(2,54) = 2.10$, $p > .05$, or gender, $F(2,54) = 1.47$, $p > .05$.

A significant interaction was found, $F(2,54) = 3.53$, $p < .05$. Using the Tukey method of post hoc analysis, a significant difference was found between High and No Note-taking conditions among the female inmates. More

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Disclosure Scores
for all Groups.

Gender ^b	Note-Taking Condition ^a		
	High	Low	No
Male			
<u>M</u>	19.8	24.2	18.6
<u>SD</u>	4.44	3.74	6.36
Female			
<u>M</u>	18.9	22.7	27.6
<u>SD</u>	9.2	4.73	9.2

^a $n = 20$ for each group

^b $n = 30$ for each group

precisely, females in the No Note-taking condition obtained significantly higher self-disclosure scores than females in the High Note-taking condition ($p < .05$). The results of the post hoc analysis may be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of Group Comparisons using Tukey's Method of
Post Hoc Analysis

Groups ^a	Treatment Total Differences
M/N vs M/H	12
M/L vs M/H	44
M/N vs M/L	56
F/N vs F/H	87 *
F/L vs F/H	38
F/N vs F/L	49
M/N vs F/N	90 *
M/N vs F/L	41
M/N vs F/H	3
M/L vs F/N	34
M/L vs F/L	15
M/L vs F/H	53
M/H vs F/N	78 *
M/H vs F/L	29
M/H vs F/H	9

Tukey's Critical Value $p < .05 = 76.33$; $p < .01 = 94.97$.

* $p < .05$

^aM=Males; F=Females

N=No Notes; L=Low Notes; H=High Notes.

Discussion

One hypothesis of this study was that prisoners asked to discuss what was assumed to be intimate topics would disclose less while notes were being taken than prisoners asked to discuss intimate topics without notes being taken by the interviewer. However, empirical support for this hypothesis was not found. Differences exist among experts regarding the effects of note-taking on behavior. Freud contended that note-taking during the session makes an unfavorable impression on clients, impedes the attention of the therapist, and is generally not necessary in most situations (Rieff, 1977). The distracting nature of note-taking is further addressed by Edinburg, Zinburg, and Kelman (1975) and MacKinnon and Michels (1971). Sullivan (1970) disapproved of note-taking for purposes other than the collection of social data, maintaining that clients are less able to talk openly when written records are being kept. Similarly Langs (1979) opposes note-taking of any kind as it implies violations of privacy and confidentiality and precludes a secure therapeutic relationship. Finally, some therapists maintain that the practice of note-taking may cause clients to focus on topics that elicit note-taking (Seligman, 1986; MacKinnon & Michels, 1971).

In contrast, Benjamin (1987) argues that benefits include refreshing the therapist's memory, facilitating professional discussions of cases, and providing a means of self-monitoring for the therapist. He states further that clients may interpret the lack of note-taking as indifference. Leon (1982) also approves of note-taking. He maintains that clients expect a certain amount of record keeping and that, when properly explained, the practice need not adversely affect clients' perceptions. Results of the present study did not indicate significance in disclosure level as a function of note-taking.

Several reasons for the lack of significance are proposed. It is possible that the levels of note-taking were unnoticed between groups. Another possibility is that an inmate population, although likely to be more suspicious than the general population, may expect more record keeping. Record keeping is an integral part of the correctional system. Thus, it is possible that as a result of being exposed to note-taking situations on previous occasions, participants were no longer concerned about this activity.

An additional factor that may account for nonsignificance is that self-disclosure within the interview was not measured. Rather, an existing scale was used to explore the self-disclosure level of participants.

Different results may have been found had an outcome technique specifically designed for this study been used. Finally, the information revealed by the participants (i.e. circumstances surrounding incarceration and opinion as to the fairness of treatment) may not have been perceived as intimate by the inmates. Consequently, the inmates may not have felt uncomfortable about the topics they were asked to discuss during the interview.

It was also hypothesized that a main effect for gender would be found. However, this hypothesis failed to receive statistical support. Differences in self-disclosure between the genders has been consistently found by other investigators. For example, Chelune (1976), using a multidimensional procedure, studied the roles of sex and target differences in behavioral samples of disclosure along the following five parameters: amount, intimacy, rate, affective manner of presentation, and self-disclosure flexibility. Although females did not disclose a greater percentage of information, they did disclose more intimate information and at a higher rate than did the male subjects. However, several other factors seem to play a part in determining which sex is more disclosing. Research indicates that the sex and relationship of the interviewer affects men and women differently in regards to their level of self-disclosure. For example, Brooks (1974) found that

males disclosed more to females and females disclosed more to males. In this study, only female interviewers were employed. Therefore, one would expect decreased disclosure on the part of the female subjects. It has been suggested, however, that sex roles rather than biological sex are a more accurate predictor of self-disclosure. In a 1980 study conducted by Pearson, no significant differences in the total self-disclosure of men and women were found. Yet when men and women were divided into groups based on their masculinity/femininity, significant differences were obtained. Pearson concluded that previous conflicting findings may be a result of ignoring sex roles. The results of the present study are not consistent with previous findings.

The nonsignificant results obtained may also be due to the type of population used with respect to the content of the interview. That is, it may be that inmates were willing to disclose information regarding their incarceration because a breach of confidentiality on the part of the interviewer held few negative consequences. Since sentencing of the inmates had already occurred, disclosure of the interview information would have little effect on the inmate. Additionally, it may be that inmates in a minimum security prison as opposed to a higher security institution are less suspicious.

Although significant differences were not found, for the main effects of level of note-taking or gender, additional studies should be conducted prior to concluding that neither note-taking nor gender affect self-disclosure. Future studies may utilize additional measures of self-disclosure. More specifically, analysis of the information disclosed in the interview may enhance that results found using the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank and the Disclosure Rating Scale. Such studies could also include a measure that would indicate participants' awareness of the manipulation of the dependent variable.

Utilization of a population that is not incarcerated, or inmates incarcerated in a higher security prison may also be conducted. Regardless of population, participants should be asked to discuss more intimate topics or those in which a breach of confidentiality would be of some consequence to the participant. Examples may include participants' sexual attitudes and experiences, feelings regarding family, embarrassing situations, or past illegal behavior.

Although no significant main effects were obtained, a significant gender by level of note-taking interaction was found. That is, women in the no note-taking condition disclosed more than women in the high note-taking condition. This finding may have clinical as well as

theoretical implications. Previous theorists have been overly simplistic when theorizing or investigating the effects of note-taking. Results of this study indicates that note-taking in combination with other variables may be of importance. In this case it was found that taking notes when interviewing females reduces the extent to which they are willing to disclose relative to males. Additional research exploring the effects of different personality and situational variables in combination with note-taking is recommended.

A practical application of this study is that note-taking effects the level of self-disclosure, especially among females in a prison population. More specifically, women in a low security prison tend to disclose more freely when notes are not taken in a clinical interview.

Finally, although significant differences were found, it would be premature to conclude that note-taking among female prisoners reduces the extent to which they self-disclose. Additional studies are needed. Future researchers who incorporate the above guidelines into their experimental designs may maximize their ability to detect actual significant differences and the generalizability of their findings.

Appendix A
Incomplete Sentences Blank

DIRECTIONS: Assume that the person who just interviewed you asked you to respond to the following sentences stems. Write your response in the space provided. Be sure to write something for each incomplete sentence. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. Back home _____

2. The best _____

3. People _____

4. Mother _____

5. At times of failure _____

6. In school _____

7. As a child _____

8. The future _____

9. The only trouble _____

10. Secretly _____

11. Friends _____

12. Sometimes _____

13. Affection _____

14. In the past _____

15. When _____

Appendix B
Background Information Questionnaire

Background Information Questionnaire

Register # _____

1. Age: _____
2. Marital Status: single _____ separated _____
married _____ divorced _____
3. Number of children: _____
4. Length of time 6 mos or less _____ 2 years or less _____
you have been
in this prison 1 year or less _____ more than 2 yrs _____
5. Vocation or job title _____
6. Occupational plans upon release _____

7. Father's occupation: _____
8. Mother's occupation: _____
9. Father's educational level: _____
10. Mother's educational level: _____
11. What would you estimate the population of your
home town to be?
Under fifty thousand _____ Over fifty thousand _____
over one hundred thousand _____
12. What would you estimate your parents' total income
to be?
Under \$30,000 _____ \$30,000 to \$50,000 _____
\$50,000 to \$100,000 _____ over \$100,000 _____

Appendix C
Informed Consent

FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

The research project in which you have agreed to participate is being conducted by Kim D. Lowrey and Barbara J. Gontz, graduate students in psychology at University of North Texas. Your participation in the project will involve approximately one hour of your time. During this time, you will be asked to discuss the general circumstances surrounding your offense and the fairness of your treatment and incarceration. Immediately following this discussion, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires about the interview. This study offers you the opportunity to freely express your opinions in a confidential setting. Your participation involves no discomforts or risks to you. You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty. Should you have any questions about the study, we will answer them at the completion of the study.

This research is being conducted under the general authority of 18 U.S.C. 4001 (b) and 4042 (2) which permits the conduction of research on the correctional environment.

I, _____ understand the purpose of the study as explained above, and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is voluntary. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence and that my participation will not be individually identifiable in any reports. I further understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for not participating in the study.

(Signature)	(Reg. No.)	(Unit)	(Date)
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(Witness)	(Date)
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Return to the Psychology Department

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