**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** A Grounded Theory of Female Adolescents Dating Experiences and Factors Influencing Safety: The Dynamics of the Circle

**Authors:**

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
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Dear Dr. Lolu da-Silva

Based on reviewers comments the following changes have been made to the manuscript (MS# 1029060536118955). Each number corresponds to the reviewer’s report.

**Lutz review**

**Minor Essential Revisions**

(1) The following changes were made.

Interpersonal violence is occurring within adolescent dating relationships similar in form to that in adult relationships and constitutes a social problem worth investigation [4-11]. Differences in prevalence rates reported depend on the severity of the form of violence measured (physical versus verbal), age of sample, and means of collecting the information (interview, self-report, etc.). Findings from one study suggest an increased prevalence of dating violence in twelfth-grade compared to female adolescents in grades 9-12 [12].

(2) All sections changed as recommend in 2a-c. In addition a clarification was added to stress that this was the initial interview guide. Initial was added to the label as well.

(3) Changed the labeling of the stages for consistent wording. Suggested wording changes in (3) were made. Level of uncertainty r/t intention to hurt was clarified. Emotional investment was clarified. Re-ordered (f) and followed suggested sentence structure.

(4) The model was derived from literature. I clarified it in this way.

(a) There is another model that aims to explain the cycle of adolescent violence. The model, entitled the cycle of adolescent violence, was created using concepts existing in the literature [30]. The model suggest that within a dating relationship, both persons bring to that relationship certain genetic and personality factors and environmental and socialization factors . . . . (b) Both represent important contributions to the study of adolescent dating relationships. Differences may exist as a result of data gathered from an external perspective (that of the researcher) and data gathered from an inward perspective (that of the adolescent teen). Further more, this study is inductively derived whereas the cycle of adolescent dating violence was derived using deductively deduced existing knowledge.

(5) I fixed #3,7,15,20 and changed the format of the bibliography per example article reference (number 6) in instructions for authors

**Discretionary Revisions**

(1) Changed construction to: These are: stage one, the self-focused stage in which the adolescent is concerned only with the relationship’s effect on self; stage two, in which the focus becomes the role, and stage three, individuated connectedness.

(1b)-(4a) Changed per recommendations

**Ackard Review**

**General**

(1) & (2) I added this transitional sentence along with adding the purpose to the end of this paragraph.

Ideally, accomplishment of these stages leads to healthy dating relationships. However, within this developmental process, adolescents might also experience negative and/or abusive relationships. The purpose of this study was to explore the nature and characteristics of adolescent females’ dating relationships, including any experiences of abuse.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

(1) I added more detail from the study. These authors compared threats of violence compared to actual physical violence.

One study reported an increase incidence of actual physical violence compared to verbal threats of violence in adolescent relationships. Suggesting, physical violence is more prevalent than threatened violence and that there might not be a great amount of warning for physical violence occurring in the adolescent population [4].

(2) These sentences are related in that teens that don’t report lower life satisfaction might view abusive events along with suicide attempt or ideation as normal. Clarification added on page 5.

(3) Changed to: Teens may not define violent acts as abuse or violence.
This section was included to apply the methodological base to the concept of adolescent dating. “Skewed perceptions” does not necessarily mean that they don’t know abuse is wrong. However, within the context of their relationship they might be unable to recognize it, and/or act on it. In addition since teens don’t have much experience they might not know what a healthy relationship looks like. If their first relationship involved a large amount of control their perceptions might be skewed to expect that controlling behaviors are a measure of commitment, seriousness. This is recognized and well documented in the adult sexual abuse literature where some women survivors of sexual abuse in childhood report not being able to achieve sexual satisfaction without inclusion of abuse acts within their sexual experience. Their sexual development has been skewed to include abusive acts as necessary for a sexual relationship to occur. I’ve changed this section to read:

Using this construct, intimacy and abuse are viewed as existing as a result of symbolic interactions within the context of the individual in society. By applying symbolic interactionism to the concept of adolescent dating, intimacy and abuse might exist as a result of symbolic interactions within the context of the individual in society. Both the perpetration and acceptance of abuse might exist in the adolescent dating relationship as a result of skewed perceptions in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to develop and form healthy intimate relationships.

I’ve added a sentence to indicate that a flyer was used in the first sampling stage; the second stage of sampling is described.

The use of a name facilitates flow in the narrative giving it a more humanistic representation. It is important to see Sara’s statement within the context of Sara’s story. In a narrative representation of data, it is difficult for the reader to follow participant number 1-20 or A- T whereas the use of fictional names (Sara, Deana, Karen) allow the reader to follow the individual participants. Use of fictional names is an established practice in the representation of qualitative data. Both the IRB proposal and consent form included permission to use fictional names in publication. Careful consideration was taken to ensure that not only were the names fictional but that none of the fictional names were names of any participant in the study. Adding ages to the names of the participants does not necessarily add to the data because these teens were asked about their history of dating experiences along with those of their friends. An 18-year-old teen might be talking about a relationship that occurred at age 12 or 13, or of a 12-year-old friend, or a 17-year-old friend at as 13. I feel adding this type of detail will not help to clarify but will instead confuse the reader. However, careful consideration was given in the development of the manuscript to separate out early relationships from later relationships and analysis included the developmental age of the teen and/or her friend. These are represented in the resulting theory and concepts throughout the manuscript.

I would like to thank the reviewers for their time and thoughtful consideration for revision of this manuscript and would like to submit this revised version of the manuscript.

Sharyl Eve Toscano