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Making I-Contact: Fostering Shared, In-the-moment Subjective Experiences

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MAKING I-CONTACT: FOSTERING SHARED, IN-THE-MOMENT SUBJECTIVE
EXPERIENCES

A Dissertation Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

Numerous research studies have offered evidence that I-sharing (perceived subjective similarity) facilitates interpersonal connection (e.g. Huneke & Pinel, 2016; Pinel, Long, Landau, Alexander, & Pyszczynski, 2006; Pinel & Long, 2012). Despite this research, no interventions currently exist to foster I-sharing between individuals, thereby leaving interventionists and others unable to utilize I-sharing to nurture authentic connections. The current dissertation takes an important step in the direction of developing usable interventions based on I-sharing research. Specifically, I examine the effectiveness of a technique designed to foster I-sharing genuinely between individuals. Building on I-sharing theory, which specifies that people most confidently believe that they I-share when they react simultaneously and identically to the same stimulus (Pinel et al., 2006), I randomly assigned participants either to experience novel, emotionally-arousing stimuli that provoke predictable reactions in a context in which participants could also experience each other's in-the-moment subjective experiences (the Fostered I-sharing condition), or in a condition in which they could not fully experience each other's experiences (the comparison condition). To investigate whether I-sharing also proves effective for people who see themselves as dissimilar on an important self dimension, I also manipulated perceived value similarity of the other participant prior to the I-sharing intervention. Participants either learned of an unshared value, learned of a shared value, or did not receive any value information. Results showed that the I-sharing intervention significantly increased feelings of subjective similarity, but only increased liking and interpersonal behavior when participants also initially learned that they shared a similar value. I discuss potential explanations for results, and means of intervention improvement.

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MAKING I-CONTACT: FOSTERING SHARED, IN-THE-MOMENT SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES

"When we establish human connections within the context of shared experience we create community wherever we go."

— Gina Greenlee

"The magic of film isn't just because of the big screen, or the acoustics, but the ineffable shared experience of going to the movies."

— Fernando Perez

When a person believes his or her in-the-moment subjective experience mirrors another person's in-the-moment subjective experience, one can say that he or she *I-shares* with the other person (Pinel, Long, Landau, Alexander, & Pyszczynski, 2006). Over the past decade, dozens of studies have shown that I-sharing fosters positive interpersonal outcomes. Research suggests that I-sharing facilitates liking (Pinel, Long, Landau, & Pyszczynski, 2004; Pinel et al., 2006), bridges ingroup/outgroup divides (Pinel & Long, 2012), provides an immunization against conformity pressures (Pinel, Long, & Crimin, 2010), combats the tendency for individuals to see outgroup members as less than human (Pinel, Yawger, Long, Brenna, Rampy, & Finnell, 2017), and fosters selflessness (Huneke & Pinel, 2016).

Given the potential for I-sharing to better people's lives, individuals and society would benefit from the development of interventions that foster I-sharing between

individuals. Although research data have provided us with a growing understanding of the consequences of I-sharing, little research has explicitly considered its antecedents. What fosters genuine I-sharing between individuals? In service to internal validity, almost all of the previous techniques researchers used to examine I-sharing used *fabricated* responses from a *bogus* ostensible other to manipulate systematically whether participants thought another person I-shared with them. This created the environment necessary to study I-sharing from a basic science perspective. Now that we know – thanks to data generated by these controlled laboratory experiments – what good I-sharing can accomplish, we can shift our research attention to developing techniques that can help us move I-sharing work from the lab to a more applied setting, where it has the potential to do the most good.

The current dissertation examines the effectiveness of a technique designed to foster I-sharing between individuals. Specifically, this technique consists of having people simultaneously experience together novel, emotionally-arousing stimuli that provoke predictable reactions in a context where they can infer each other's experience. In what follows, I lay out the reasoning behind the technique, and the framework for testing it. First, I define and discuss the origins of I-sharing. Next, I review the research methods previously used to manipulate I-sharing, and some of the key findings from I-sharing research. I then discuss the factors that influence inferences of I-sharing, and I introduce the I-sharing fostering technique tested here.

The Constructs of I-sharing and Me-sharing

The concepts of I-sharing and Me-sharing stem from an expansion of William

James' (1890/1918) notions of the "Me" and "I" (Pinel et al., 2006). James (1890/1918) discusses how one might separate the self into the Me, or objective self, and the I, or subjective self. According to James, the Me is the self-concept, the self-as-object, the known. It is the part of oneself that encompasses what one thinks when one looks upon oneself, everything one knows about oneself. This includes, for instance, one's political party affiliation, one's race, and one's hometown. Anything stable and declarable one thinks about oneself represents an aspect of the Me. James (1890/1918) distinguishes the Me from the I, which encompasses the agentic part of the self that actually experiences reality. It is the *knower*, the self-as-subject (Pinel et al., 2006). The I refers to the passing states of consciousness that change from second to second as one's experience of reality changes.

Pinel and colleagues (Pinel, Long, & Crimin, 2008) have often made an analogy to a mirror to illustrate the difference between the I and Me. When looking in the mirror, all of what one sees in that mirror (e.g., the color of one's skin and hair, whether one is tall or short, whether one has small or big teeth) represent aspects of the Me. The actual experience of that image, though, the fear that one might soon be getting gray hair, the relief that a large pimple is disappearing, or the questioning of whether one actually really does look like a famous celebrity, represents the in-the-moment experience, the I. The I changes from second to second as the experience of the person changes, whereas the Me remains relatively constant.

When people believe they share aspects of the objective self (the Me) in common (such as both being African-American, both being Republicans, or both being veterans)

one can say that they *Me-share* (Pinel et al., 2006). On the other hand, one can say that two individuals *I-share* when they believe that they share the same subjective experience, i.e., when they believe their ‘I’s overlap (Pinel et al., 2006). Although one can infer I-sharing from a variety of cues, Pinel and colleagues (Pinel et al., 2006; Pinel, Long, & Huneke, 2015) have suggested that the most foolproof cue that one has I-shared with another occurs when two people have a *simultaneous* and *identical* reaction to the same stimulus. This can occur, for instance, when two people both shiver from the same cold wind, offer the same silly response to an absurd question, or laugh at the fact that they both cannot stop laughing. In line with this perspective, research does indeed show that response delays reduce the influence of I-sharing, but not of Me-sharing (Pinel, Long, & Huneke, 2015).

Theory and research suggests that much of I-sharing’s influence stems from its ability to combat existential isolation, a loneliness arising from the fact that individuals cannot ever fully experience the world through the same phenomenological lens as another (Pinel et al., 2006; Pinel, Long, Murdoch, & Helm, 2017; Yalom, 1980). In a reality full of existentially isolated individuals, I-sharing helps to bridge these experiential rifts, and thus alleviate existential isolation fears. Supporting this reasoning, Pinel and colleagues (2006) showed that I-sharing had the most positive interpersonal effects on participants whom researchers manipulated to feel existentially isolated. By relieving this existential isolation, Pinel and colleagues (2006, 2017) have argued, I-sharing helps to validate one’s beliefs, fulfill basic self-needs, and foster interpersonal connection.

Although disentangling I-sharing from Me-sharing at times can be difficult given the abstract nature of the I and Me, for basic research purposes it is vitally important. As I-sharing and Me-sharing inferences correlate to a degree (see Pinel, Johnson, & Long, 2017), researchers conducting basic research have made a concerted effort to disentangle them to fully discern whether similarity effects can be attributed to inferring a shared I, a shared Me, or both. To accomplish this, I-sharing researchers have thus focused mainly on manipulating, over a computer, the supposed responses of another ostensible participant (Huneke & Pinel, 2016; Pinel & Long, 2012; Pinel, Long, & Huneke, 2015). Although no other person usually exists, participants believe one does. The computer leads participants to believe the other person separately chooses similar or dissimilar answers to participants' own answers. These questions pertain to I-implicating, in-the-moment experiences of novel stimuli (such as gut-level responses to inkblots or imagining celebrities as objects), and/or Me-implicating, stable aspects of the self that participants have almost certainly thought about before and incorporated into their self-concepts (such as beliefs, values, or demographic differences). By systematically manipulating these criteria researchers can thus disentangle I-sharing from Me-sharing.

The guarantee of similarity or dissimilarity of responses in the manipulations of I-sharing also has an added benefit of reducing noise in these experiments by largely *ensuring* inferences of I-sharing. Although interventionists can carefully choose stimuli that individuals will likely react similarly to, some variation of response will always still exist, and thus interventionists can never fully ensure I-sharing. For basic research purposes, researchers have thus chosen to manipulate feedback to ensure similarity of

response and to create the conditions under which one can best study I-sharing systematically. Indeed they have showcased I-sharing's potency in establishing a host of positive interpersonal outcomes (Huneke & Pinel, 2016; Pinel et al., 2006; Pinel & Long, 2012).

For instance, research shows that although both I-sharing and Me-sharing can increase reported liking of another, only I-sharing increases how much of a desired good participants anonymously give to another (Huneke & Pinel, 2016). Similarly, although people might report equal levels of liking for a belief sharer (an important aspect of the Me) and I-sharer, people only show increased helping intentions toward the I-sharer (Huneke & Pinel, 2016). In terms of outgroup members, Pinel and Long (2012) have shown that I-sharing improves liking and increases the likelihood that one would interact with a number of salient outgroup members, such as people of a different gender, race, or sexual orientation. I-sharing's effect in such cases overshadows and negates the robust tendency for people to favor ingroup members (Pinel & Long, 2012). I-sharing can also help people find the courage to voice disagreement with other individuals who are all making blatantly incorrect judgments. Research shows, for instance, that, after I-sharing, people feel more comfortable *not* conforming to an obviously wrong line assessment provided by others (Pinel, Long, & Crimin, 2010).

Given all of the positive effects of I-sharing, it stands to reason that society would profit from fostering I-sharing between individuals in many situations. Society and interventionists cannot, however, successfully use the previously used manipulations in the real world to foster I-sharing as neither the feedback, nor often the other participants,

are real. Now that we know possibilities offered by I-sharing, it is important for researchers to develop and experimentally test techniques that can readily facilitate I-sharing between individuals, techniques that do not rely on false feedback, or bogus others. Without creating and testing such manipulations, one can never foster I-sharing between two *real* individuals, thereby neglecting one of the largest impacts I-sharing can have – creating genuine connections.

On Fostering I-sharing

Given the positive effects of I-sharing, researchers have theorized that fostering I-sharing in a number of settings would increase the chances of beneficial outcomes. Researchers have suggested, for instance, that fostering I-sharing would be beneficial in: (1) inspiring people to act more selflessly towards one another in a work setting (Huneke & Pinel, 2016); (2) helping foster a strong therapeutic alliance between therapist and client (Pinel, Bernecker, & Rampy, 2015); (3) helping couples in therapy to reconnect (Pinel, Bernecker, & Rampy, 2015); (4) helping individuals overcome racial prejudices (Pinel & Long, 2012; Gaither, Remedios, Schultz, Maddox, & Sommers, 2016); (5) fostering more inclusive behavior toward stigmatized others (Pinel et al., 2016); and (6) helping people resolve conflict (Pinel, 2011). In addition to these, countless other situations exist where fostering I-sharing might have beneficial outcomes, including helping children who are not getting along start to see each other's perspectives, or improving the increasingly strained relationship between police officers and outgroup community members.

As bridging situations of difference comprise many of the previously theorized

applications of I-sharing, interventionists interested in potentially using an I-sharing intervention should test any intervention in such a difference situation as well. Can one use I-sharing to help overcome disagreements and differences?

Many of these disagreements may stem from differences in the ‘Me’ (such as coming from different backgrounds, or holding different beliefs). Establishing I-sharing experiences in such circumstances could help bridge these ‘Me’ divides as these divides might damage relationships in part by hampering moments of I-sharing (Allport, 1979; Long, 2007). Restoring those I-sharing connections could thus improve those relationships. Research, for example, both shows that individuals can dislike others based solely on these differences in the ‘Me’ (Allport, 1979), and that individuals may lessen potential moments of I-sharing with those they dislike by avoiding experiencing the same stimuli (Long, 2007). Long (2007), for instance, showed that participants made to dislike a target through ostensible negative feedback, when given a choice of foods to eat, avoided choosing to eat the same food the target chose to eat significantly more than random chance would suggest. As experimental I-sharing research shows that I-sharing can help connect individuals who differ in regards to aspects of the Me (Pinel and Long, 2012), creating a manipulation that forces individuals to experience the same stimuli may help to facilitate I-sharing, and help facilitate interpersonal connection even in situations of dislike. Researchers testing an I-sharing intervention should thus test two competing hypotheses – the hypothesis that important Me differences will negate the effectiveness of any specific I-sharing intervention versus the hypothesis that the I-sharing intervention will help overcome those differences.

To be truly useful, an I-sharing intervention needs to be short, effective, easy to use, testable, and able to be used in a variety of settings. Brief motivational interviewing interventions represent one example of an intervention that succeeds on these dimensions (Bien, Miller, & Tonigan, 1993). Brief motivational interviewing interventions focus on altering a person's intrinsic motivation to help modify behavior. Researchers have shown brief motivational interviewing interventions to work in a number of domains, including helping deal with alcohol abuse, improving school success, and improving family relationships (Bien, Miller, & Tonigan, 1993; Herman, Reinke, Frey, & Shepard, 2013). What researchers have shown brief motivational interviewing to do for alcohol abuse, a similarly short and effective I-sharing intervention might be able to do for relationships.

To create an effective I-sharing intervention one should focus on the key factors researchers have suggested influence whether one concludes one has I-shared with another or not. As noted before, Pinel and colleagues (2006) suggested that the most foolproof cue that one I-shares with another occurs when one reacts identically and simultaneously to the same stimulus. Pinel, Long, and Huneke (2015), for instance, showed that delays in receiving I-sharing information reduced cooperation for I-sharers in a prisoner's dilemma game, but that delays had no effect on Me-sharers. The best chance of fostering I-sharing between individuals, then, is putting them in a situation in which they both are likely to react similarly and simultaneously to the same stimulus, and in which individuals are given the chance to infer that shared experience.

To ensure I-sharing occurs, researchers and interventionists should first engineer a situation that maximizes the likelihood that people will experience a stimulus presented

identically. As I will discuss in the next section, having people experience novel, emotionally arousing stimuli that provoke predictably similar reactions represents a theoretically powerful way of fostering I-sharing. In addition, to ensure an I-sharing experience, interventionists should also create a context in which people can make an inference that the other person experiences a stimulus similarly. When people witness and infer another person's experience, and conclude that that person has an identical experience to their own, they will then conclude that they I-shared with the person. In the sections that follow, I discuss ways one can increase the chances a stimulus will foster I-sharing, and ways that that one can create a situation that increases the chances individuals will make an inference of I-sharing.

Providing Stimuli that Will Likely Foster I-sharing

On September 11th, 2001 the U.S. and world were shocked by the tragic destruction of the Twin Towers, the attack on the Pentagon, and the downing of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. During this tragedy, millions of Americans watched the same stimulus of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers. This stimulus created largely universal reactions of sadness and anger in Americans. Even as people's actual reactions to the terrorist attacks may have varied a little, by and large people believed they experienced the horror roughly similarly, and thus many I-shared regarding this tragic event. Such tragic events likely bring together individuals in part due to these shared experiences. Similar to how the original TV broadcasts most certainly elicited I-sharing experiences in many individuals, finding stimuli that people largely react similarly to, and having them experience those stimuli together may be one of the best ways to create I-sharing, and

thus to improve relations.

But what stimuli may elicit such global responses? A combination of cognitive and neuroscientific research indicates that stimuli that are *novel* and *emotionally arousing* are the likeliest to establish both universal reactions, and powerful subjective responses (Johnston, Hawley, Plewe, Elliott, & DeWitt, 1990; Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000). To have the greatest success at making I-contact, researchers should expose individuals to novel stimuli that elicit strong emotions.

Interventionists should select *novel* stimuli because people's experience with a stimulus changes with each experience of it; in other words, individuals become habituated to a stimulus with repeated exposure (Rankin et al., 2009). Watching the planes hit the Twin Towers in archival footage may elicit different, or less intense, responses now than when people first witnessed this terrifying scene. When an individual has seen a stimulus, and another has not, then the individuals' experiences of that stimulus may differ simply because of this factor. After people's original in-the-moment experience passes, their memory of how they experienced a stimulus also becomes a part of the Me (albeit a part that also is quite indicative of the I), and thus they may infer some shared aspect of the Me over a shared aspect of the I. In addition, individuals pay more visual and mental attention to novel stimuli (Johnston, Hawley, Plewe, Elliott, & DeWitt, 1990; Rankin et al., 2009), and thus the chances of making I-sharing inferences increases as this increased attention likely makes one more in tune with one's own experience of it, thereby making a person more able to see similarities between one's own, and another's experience.

Providing stimuli to two individuals that neither of them has seen therefore should increase the chances that those two people will experience the stimuli similarly. Thus, to ensure one elicits the strongest inferences of I-sharing, interventionists should have individuals experience *novel* stimuli together.

Interventionists should also select *emotionally evocative* stimuli because emotionally evocative stimuli both increase the chances that one will have the same experience as another, and that one will pick up on that similarity. From the sadness felt after the death of a beloved celebrity, to the annoyance and anger felt from the sound of a loud nearby jackhammer, to the joy of seeing individuals smile, emotion-inducing stimuli often elicit strong and similar emotional reactions from different people (Brosch, Pourtois, & Sander, 2010).

Emotionally evocative stimuli also cause people to pick up more on their own, and other people's subjective experiences. As compared to when people are exposed to neutral stimuli, humans show increased brain activity (especially in the amygdala) when they are exposed to emotionally arousing stimuli (Hamann, Ely, Grafton, & Kilts, 1999), and use more cognitive resources processing emotionally arousing stimuli (Loftus, 1980). Thus it should come as no surprise that people tend both to pay more attention to emotionally evocative stimuli (Hartikainen, Ogawa, Soltani, & Knight, 2007), and remember emotionally arousing stimuli better (Bradley, Greenwald, Petry, & Lang, 1992). This increased attention and memory should thus increase the chances that one will pick up on a similarity another person has to one's own subjective state as one can recognize one's own state more accurately. Emotionally evocative stimuli also elicit

automatic reactions in others that one can pick up on (Fasel & Luettin, 2003), further improving the chances one will notice a similarity.

Not surprisingly, research already shows that sharing stimuli that are *novel* and *arousing* (albeit not specifically emotionally) may positively influence interpersonal relationships (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000). In several studies, Aron et al. (2000) randomly assigned romantic couples to complete a 7-minute physically arousing and novel task (being tied together and having to navigate obstacles over mats), or a similar, but more mundane task (having to roll a ball across the same mats). They found that couples assigned to the arousing and novel task reported greater increases in relationship satisfaction than couples in the more mundane task. From an I-sharing perspective, one might expect such a result, as novel and arousing stimuli and actions would create a higher probability that two individuals will both experience a stimuli in the same way, and that they will pick up on those experiences.

In determining what stimuli might provoke universal responses and foster I-sharing, one should thus look toward emotionally-arousing stimuli that individuals have never experienced before. Short films represent one potentially promising way of eliciting a novel, emotionally evocative, and universal experience. First, people in general have not seen them, making them novel. Second, like feature length films, short films have the capacity to elicit strong and often predictable emotional responses. Finally, from an intervention standpoint, short films fit in the abbreviated time frame of an intervention or experiment. Thus, having people experience novel and emotionally evocative short films that provoke predictable reactions together should help foster I-

sharing.

Having a stimulus that individuals will subjectively experience in the same way, and that will promote I-sharing only represents one part of the equation. If two people actually have the same experience, but do not recognize that they do, then they will not know that they have I-shared. I-sharing specifically relies on individuals *believing* they have shared an in-the-moment subjective experience. For instance, at any given point in time all across the world, people watching live TV might be having the same subjective experience. Millions of individuals might react with horror as a major character in one of their favorite shows is killed. If one is alone, or not picking up on another person's experience of the fictional death, then one will not have I-shared. Only if one infers that another individual experiences something similarly will one believe one has I-shared. Thus creating a context where individuals can infer one another's experience represents another key ingredient in fostering I-sharing.

Creating a Context that Will Likely Foster I-sharing

In addition to providing a stimulus that will foster I-sharing, one must also create a *context* that will foster I-sharing. A context ripe for I-sharing should allow for individuals to make inferences about another individual's experience of a stimulus. To accomplish this, the interpersonal situation should allow for individuals to perceive, and at least subconsciously pay attention to, one another's experience.

Accomplishing this involves having individuals experience stimuli in situations where their senses can directly detect the expressions of others. If individuals are unable to detect the expressions of others, even when they are experiencing the same stimuli at

the same time, they will not be able to infer whether they I-shared, or not. For instance, two individuals in a long distance relationship may watch a movie together over the internet. Although perhaps a more pleasant experience than watching the movie alone, they may fail to establish an existential connection in such a situation because they cannot ascertain one another's in-the-moment states. Just watching the same movie at the same time as another person, such as through the internet, may not be enough. From an I-sharing perspective, it is also important that individuals are able to *infer the experience* of others. I-sharing interventions should thus provide an opportunity for individuals to sense the experiences of others. This may be particularly difficult in present-day society, which often contains constant distractions. From busy streets, to the internet, to smartphones, people are constantly bombarded with stimuli that wrestle for their attention (Campbell, 2006). Providing a situation where individuals actively disconnect from such overstimulation would increase the chances of them noticing their shared subjective experiences.

There also may be situations where a person resists putting effort into experiencing the same stimuli (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Long, 2007). As discussed before this may occur in situations where people already dislike each other (Long, 2007). In addition, in situations where one is unable to notice another person's experiences (such as watching a movie over the internet), or where one needs to put in a lot of effort to notice those experiences, people might not notice each other's experiences. Consider initial efforts by Sherif et al. (1961), whereby competing groups at a camp that detested each other watched a maritime instructional video in the same room.

The groups, as one would expect, sat along group lines. As it was much easier for the campers to examine the experiences of their nearby ingroup than it was to witness the outgroup, the campers likely did not even pick up on how the outgroup members were experiencing the instructional video. Not surprisingly Sherif witnessed no change in the ingroup/outgroup divides. Removing competing reaction and distance barriers by having two people sit side by side, and in isolation from other people, should thus also increase the chances that they will pick up on similar experiences.

By decreasing the rate of distraction, and creating a situation where people can pick up on each other's experiences, interventionists should increase the rates of I-sharing between people experiencing the world similarly. In the next section I discuss how one might go about testing such an intervention.

The Current Study

The current study tested two main research questions. First, does jointly exposing people to novel and emotionally evocative stimuli that create predictable reactions in viewers, in a situation in which the viewers can infer another's experience, promote I-sharing and subsequent interpersonal connection? Second, does this effect extend across differing levels of Me similarity, such as situations in which individuals know of a previous value disagreement, agreement, or in which they have no information of another's beliefs? Previous I-sharing research indicates that I-sharing can help overcome such "Me-sharing" (Pinel & Long, 2012); does jointly experiencing novel and emotionally evocative stimuli that create predictable reactions help overcome these differences as well? Or do differences in the Me diminish the effectiveness of this type

of I-sharing intervention?

To test these questions, I had participants come into the lab two at a time, and remain in the same room as one another. Participants initially filled out a value questionnaire aimed at deriving some Me-sharing information (i.e., their values). I then randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions – a dissimilar-Me condition, a similar-Me condition, or a No Info Me condition. The researcher collected and looked at these responses, and, unknown to the participants, had participants write an essay either on the topic that they disagreed the most on, or the one they agreed the most on. In the dissimilar-Me condition, participants wrote and then read each other's essays on the topic on which they disagreed the most. In the similar-Me condition, participants wrote and then read each other's essays on the topic on which they agreed the most. In the No Info Me condition, participants wrote about the topic they disagreed on the most, but did not read each other's essays and so did not receive any value similarity information.

I then randomly assigned participants to one of two I-sharing conditions. Participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition experienced the same novel and emotionally evocative short films together, at the same time, and in such a way that they could see each other's reactions. Participants in the comparison condition were able to see each other's reactions, but experienced the stimuli in a different order from one another, and were not able to see the stimuli which the other person was reacting to (and so could not make an inference of I-sharing). In addition the researcher told participants in the comparison condition that they were experiencing different stimuli so that they would not assume they I-shared simply because they were watching the same things. By

having participants actually experience the same stimuli though, and having them able to see each other in both conditions, one can rule out that either the stimuli, or the mere exposure effect (see Zajonc, 1968), might lead to any differences between the conditions.

For all participants, I then asked how much they believed their own subjective experiences and the other participant's experiences overlapped (i.e., perceived subjective similarity). Participants also rated how much they liked the other person and responded to two interpersonal behavioral measures (providing or not providing their phone number to the other participant, and allotting remaining time to talking with the other participant vs. surfing the net).

I hypothesized that participants in the Fostered I-Sharing condition would rate the other participant as more subjectively similar (have more similar 'I's) than participants in the comparison condition. I also expected participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition to like the other participant more, give their phone number out more to, and allocate more time talking to the other participant than participants in the comparison condition. I hypothesized that these interpersonal effects would either occur across all levels of the Me-sharing manipulation, or, in line with research suggesting individuals might resist I-sharing with those that they dislike (see Long, 2007), that initial disagreement on the Me-sharing dimension would reduce the effectiveness of the I-sharing manipulation. In line with I-sharing theorizing, I also expected perceived subjective similarity to mediate the I-sharing condition to liking and behavioral measure relationships (Long, Pinel, & Yawger, 2016; Pinel et al., 2006).

Method

Participants

144 undergraduate students (77 stranger dyads) from a large northeastern public university completed the study for course extra credit. 91.7 percent of participants identified themselves as White, 4.9% as Black or African-American, 6.3% as Asian, 1.4% as American Indian, and 1.4% as Native Hawaiian or Other. 4.2% also identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. 78.5% of participants identified themselves as female, and 21.5% as male. Forty-six of the dyads were both female, five of the dyads were both male, and twenty-one of the dyads were mixed gender. The average age of participants was 19.13 years old.

Design

I randomly assigned participants to one of two I-sharing conditions. Participants in the Fostered I-Sharing condition watched the same novel and emotionally evocative short films simultaneously and on the same screen. Participants in the comparison condition watched the same short films in a different order from one another and on different screens. In both conditions, participants could see one another's reactions, but in the comparison condition participants could not see one another's screens. I also assigned participants to learn that their partner had either a conflicting Me that might cause dislike of the other participant, a similar Me that might facilitate liking, or no Me information. Thus, I used a 2 (I-sharing Condition: Fostered I-sharing vs Comparison) X 3 (Initial Me Condition: Dissimilar-Me, Similar-Me, No Me Information) between-subjects design.

Materials- Pretesting the Short Films

I used three short films for my I-sharing manipulation in all conditions: Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou; Chateau de Sable; and The Piano (see Appendix C for links to these films). All films came from Youtube and received over 50 likes to each dislike, suggesting people universally like them. Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou is a romantic comedy about a female (Jinxy Jenkins) for whom everything annoyingly always seems to go right, and a male (Lucky Lou) for whom everything seems to go wrong. Chateau de Sable is a slightly scary epic about a sand-castle defending itself from invasion by a crab. The Piano briefly tells the story of a man's life around a melancholic piano piece.

Prior to the experiment, I pretested these films to see if individuals largely reacted similarly to them, and to verify that they would be new to my sample. Six participants recruited through Facebook and twenty-five participants recruited through the psychology participant pool completed the pretest online. Participants watched the three videos and, after each video, answered a number of questions about each video on 6 point Likert scales labeled as 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Agree, 6-Strongly Agree. Three questions regarded their emotional reactions (comicality for Jinxy Jenkins and Lucky Lou, fear for Chateau de Sable, and sadness for the Piano; e.g. I think the previous video was funny). One question for each video assessed whether participants thought the video was emotionally evocative, and one item assessed whether participants thought others would react similarly to the video (see Appendix A). To see if the videos were novel I also asked a yes or no question regarding whether participants had seen the particular video before. No individuals

reported having seen any of the three videos, suggesting they were all novel. To assess potential agreement, I first recoded all five Likert questions into whether participants agreed (somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed) or disagreed (somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed) with the statement.

In terms of whether the short films were emotionally evocative, 93.5 percent agreed that Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou was emotionally evocative, 77.4 percent agreed that Chateau de Sable was emotionally evocative, and 100 percent agreed that The Piano was emotionally evocative. In terms of the hypothesized emotions for each video, 90.3 percent of participants agreed that Jinxy Jenkins and Lucky Lou was funny, 64.5 percent of participants agreed Chateau de Sable was scary, and 100 percent of participants agreed that The Piano was sad. 87.1% of participants thought that others would react similarly to Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou, 74.2% of participants thought others would react similarly to Chateau de Sable, and 90.3% of participants thought others would react similarly to the Piano. These results suggested that overall individuals believed they would likely react similarly to someone else to the short films chosen.

Procedure of the Main Study

For each available research session, participants signed up for one of two available time slots. The sign up instructions asked participants not to sign up for slots when they knew the other person who signed up. Participants thus came into the lab two strangers at a time. When both participants had arrived, they read and signed consent forms and the study began. First came the Me-sharing manipulation.

Me-sharing manipulation. Participants first indicated their values (an aspect of

the Me) by answering a pen and paper questionnaire regarding potential values they might have. Participants answered the value questions on nine point Likert scales ranging from “Should” on one end to “Should Not” on the other (e.g. I believe that individuals who enter this country illegally _____ be deported back to their home countries, See Appendix A). The other topics participants responded about were doctor assisted suicide, the legalization of marijuana, second trimester abortions, the banning of wearing animal fur, and transgender bathroom practices. After collecting responses, the research assistant surreptitiously looked at both participants’ responses and determined which topic participants should write about. For participants in the No Me Information and dissimilar-Me conditions, the research assistant determined the topic on which participants disagreed the most, and instructed them to write a paragraph on that topic. Participants on average differed by 4.75 points for the No Info ($SD = 1.92$), and 4.61 points for the dissimilar-Me condition ($SD = 1.7$). For the similar-Me condition, the research assistant determined the topic on which participants agreed the most, and instructed them to write using a pen and paper a paragraph on that topic (see Appendix B). Participants on average differed by .24 points in the similar-Me condition ($SD = .52$). After writing their paragraphs, participants in the dissimilar-Me and similar-Me conditions received two minutes to read each other’s paragraphs. Participants in the No Me Information condition did not read each other’s paragraphs, and so did not know of the disagreement. Did participants on average write about different topics in the similar-Me as compared to the two essay conditions where participants wrote about a topic of disagreement (the dissimilar-Me and No Me Info conditions)? Yes, in terms of topics,

participants on average agreed the most on the topics of legalization of Marijuana and transgender bathroom practices. Participants therefore wrote about these topics more often in the similar-Me condition, than did participants in the two essay conditions where participants wrote about a topic of disagreement (in the No Info, and dissimilar-Me conditions). Participants on average disagreed the most more on illegal immigration and thereby wrote more about illegal immigration in the dissimilar-Me and No-info conditions more than in the similar-Me condition.

I-sharing manipulation. After the Me-sharing manipulation, participants watched the three novel, and emotionally arousing short animated films (Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou, Chateau de Sable, and The Piano). Participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition watched these films simultaneously, on the same computer and without headphones. Participants in the comparison condition watched the same three films as one another, but in a different order from one another (e.g. one participant watched Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou, then the Piano, then Chateau de Sable; for the other participant, he or she watched Chateau de Sable, then Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou, then the Piano). In the comparison condition, a divider blocked the screen of the other participant, but not the participants themselves, and participants wore headphones. In addition, in the comparison condition, the researcher told participants they would be watching different videos.

Dependent variables and mediators. After watching the three short films, participants answered a number of questions regarding the other person in the room. So that I could examine subjective similarity as both its own dependent variable, and also as mediator for any interpersonal effects, participants first answered a measure of subjective

similarity. The subjective similarity questionnaire consisted of four items to which participants indicated their agreement on a seven point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items tapped into how similarly participants believed they experienced stimuli the same as the other participant ($\alpha = .73$, e.g. “The other participant and I experience stimuli similarly,” see Appendix D).

To rule out potential alternate explanations - that perceived objective similarity (belief that one shares objective traits, such as group status), or that expanding oneself to include the other in one’s self-concept might lead to any potential interpersonal results (see Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) - participants then also answered questionnaires regarding these alternative potential mediators. For instance it might be possible that instead of increased feelings of I-sharing, participants who underwent the intervention might feel as if the other participant is now a part of their ingroup (an objective similarity), or that the other participant’s self now overlaps with their own. In each of these cases, these alternative mediators might cause any effect on interpersonal connection rather than I-sharing. To help tease out these alternative explanations, I had participants answer a four item measure of perceived objective similarity on a seven point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree ($\alpha = .75$, “The other participant and I likely ascribe to the same groups,” see Appendix E) and the one item self-expansion question taken from Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992, see Appendix F).

I then had participants complete my main dependent variables. To examine liking, participants answered, on a six point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, a six item liking questionnaire taken from previous I-sharing research ($\alpha =$

.84, e.g. “I like the other participant,” see Appendix G).

As feelings for another do not always translate into behavior, I also then had participants respond to two behavioral measures. The first consisted of asking participants on the computer whether they were willing to exchange their phone number with the other participant followed by them actually providing their phone number if they wanted to exchange numbers. I coded participants who reported they would exchange numbers, but then did not provide a potentially usable phone number (one that contained 7 or 10 digits) when prompted, as not having provided their phone number.

Participants then completed a second behavioral measure asking participants how much time they would allocate to talking with the other participant. Participants responded to a one item prompt asking how much of the remaining time they would like to allocate to chatting with the other participant or alternatively surfing the internet (see Appendix H). Responses were made on a ten-point scale ranging from “1 minute talking/11 minutes surfing” to “11 minutes talking/1 minute surfing”

Other Measures. After completing the dependent measures, participants filled out a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix I). As research shows that existential isolation can play a pivotal role in I-sharing (see Pinel et al., 2006), I also included a six-item trait existential isolation questionnaire (Pinel, Long, Murdoch, & Helm, 2017; $\alpha = .77$, e.g. “Other people usually do not understand my experiences,” see Appendix J). Finally I included an added manipulation check questionnaire (see Appendix K). After finishing the questionnaires the research assistant debriefed participants on the true nature of the experiment.

Results

I predicted that participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition would report more perceived subjective similarity, more liking, provide their phone number more, and allocate more time to talking with the other participant than would participants in the comparison condition. I further predicted that this would either occur for all participants, or only participants who did not initially know of a value disagreement between them and their interaction partner.

Recall that participants came into the lab in dyads. Thus, before diving into testing my main hypotheses, I first needed to determine whether my observations were independent or not. Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) outlined the importance of recognizing nonindependence in dyadic data, as traditional statistical analyses assume individuals as the unit of analysis, and assume independence of observations. When researchers examine partners (e.g. husbands and wives, friends) the data of one partner sometimes affects, or covaries, with the data of the other partner. Thus, the choice of statistical tool depends on whether data show signs of nonindependence, and, if they do, a researcher should use the dyad, rather than the individual, as the unit of analysis in order to account for this dyadic covariance. The number of dyads in my sample (77) provided sufficient power to test for nonindependence (Kenny, Kashy & Cook 2006). I tested nonindependence through the partial correlation coefficient given in multilevel modelling, controlling for my predictor variables (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook 2006). Significant nonindependence results did not appear for perceived subjective similarity (CSR $\rho = .05$, $p = .71$), phone number exchange (CSR $\rho = .15$, $p = .20$), and talk time

(CSR $\rho = .1$, $p = .39$), and thus I could treat them as independent (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). My dependent variable of liking, however, showed significant nonindependence (CSR $\rho = .32$, $p = .002$). One might expect this as research shows that individuals tend to like those who like them (Lowe & Goldstein, 1970). As I randomly assigned each dyad to a condition based on my I-sharing and Me-sharing manipulations (rather than each participant separately) I had two between-dyad independent variables in a hierarchical nested design (where participants are nested within dyads, and dyads are nested within my two independent variables). In line with Kenny, Kashy, and Cook's (2006) recommendations, I summed liking scores between dyad members to form a dyad-level score. As the liking scores were now identical across the dyad, I used one member of the pair as the participant for liking analyses. By creating such a summed score, I retained variation from each participant, while still controlling for dyadic covariance (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). Although this diminishes power to a degree due to a loss of degrees of freedom, the added potential differences between the summed differences (if an effect exists) mitigates a good amount of this power loss (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006).

To first see if the I-sharing intervention affected perceptions of subjective similarity, I ran a 2 (I-sharing condition: Fostered I-sharing vs. Comparison) X 3 (Me-sharing condition: Dissimilar-Me, Similar-Me, No Me Information) ANOVA with perceived subjective similarity as the dependent variable. Two-tailed results showed that, as predicted, there was a main effect of I-sharing condition on perceived subjective similarity. Participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .74$) reported

greater feelings of subjective similarity than participants in the comparison condition ($M = 3.52, SD = .87$), $F(1, 138) = 5.64, p = .02, \eta^2 = .04$. There was also a main effect of Me-similarity condition on perceived subjective similarity, $F(2, 138) = 6.37, p = .05, \eta^2 = .04$. Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed that participants in the similar-Me condition ($M = 3.8, SD = .71$) reported marginally significantly more perceived subjective similarity ($p < .10$), than those in the dissimilar-Me condition ($M = 3.45, SD = .95$). Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed no difference between participants in the No Me Information condition ($M = 3.76, SD = .73$) and other Me-similarity conditions. There was also no significant interaction of I-sharing and Me-similarity conditions, $F(2, 138) = 1.29, p = .28$. See table 1 for a full list of means and standard deviations for all conditions regarding perceived subjective similarity and all of my other dependent measures.

To examine whether the above subjective similarity results occurred primarily due to perceived objective similarity, I reran the previous 2 (I-sharing condition) X 3 (Me-similarity condition) ANOVA adding perceived objective similarity as a covariate. Two-tailed results showed that, not surprisingly, with perceived objective similarity as a covariate, I no longer found an effect of the Me-similarity condition on perceived subjective similarity, $F(2, 137) = .103, p = .9$. With perceived objective similarity as a covariate, I still, however, found a marginally significant effect of the I-sharing manipulation on perceived subjective similarity $F(1, 137) = 2.93, p = .09, \eta^2 = .02$. One might still wonder whether the I-sharing manipulation also affected objective similarity. Running a 2 (I-sharing condition) X 3 (Me-similarity condition) ANOVA with subjective similarity now as a covariate, and perceived *objective* similarity as the

dependent variable, I showed that, not surprisingly, the Me-similarity manipulation significantly affected perceived objective similarity, $F(2, 137) = 7.13, p = .001$, but that the I-sharing manipulation did not, $F(1, 137) = .618, p = .43$.

To see if the I-sharing intervention affected liking, I ran a 2 (I-sharing Condition: Fostered I-sharing vs. Control) X 3 (Me-sharing condition: Dissimilar-Me, Similar-Me, or No Me Information) ANOVA with summed dyad liking score as the dependent variable, and each dyad serving as one unit. Two-tailed results showed no main effect of I-sharing condition ($F[1, 66] = 1.34, p = .25$), Me-sharing condition ($F[2, 66] = 1.9, p = .16$), or interaction effect ($F[2, 66] = .43, p = .65$).

As planned, I also tested the effect of I-sharing condition on liking across differing levels of Me-sharing condition. Results showed no effect of my manipulation for participants in the dissimilar-Me condition, $t(21) = .23, p = .82$, or No Me Information condition, $t(22) = .277, p = .79$. The I-sharing manipulation did however significantly affect summed dyad liking scores for participants randomly assigned to the similar-Me condition ($t(23) = 2.49, p = .03, d = .93$). The dyads who first learned of a similar Me, and then underwent the Fostered I-sharing manipulation, reported significantly more liking ($M = 8.04, SD = .66$) than similar-Me dyads who were in the I-sharing comparison condition ($M = 7.47, SD = .56$).

The small sample from just the Me-similarity condition made tests for mediation by perceived subjective similarity of this liking effect underpowered (and efforts showed no significant results). Examining whole sample partial correlations, controlling for both perceived objective similarity and how much the *other participant* liked them, did show

that perceived subjective similarity significantly correlated with participant's liking, $r(140) = .22, p = .007$. This suggests that perceived subjective similarity does indeed predict liking, and that efforts to increase perceived subjective similarity may bear interpersonal fruit. To further ensure that these partial correlation effects were not due to potential increased Type 1 error rate due to non-independence I also analyzed these data using the actor-partner interdependence model and multilevel mixed modelling (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). These analyses provided similar results to the partial correlations with both actor perceived subjective similarity, $t(133.83) = 2.76, p < .01$ and actor perceived objective similarity, $t(133.83) = 3.84, p < .001$, significantly predicting actor liking. Neither partner perceived subjective similarity, $t(133.83) = .125, p = .901$, nor partner perceived objective similarity, $t(133.83) = 1.52, p = .11$, significantly predict actor liking. Along with other experimental data (see Pinel et al., 2006), these data suggest that, despite no mediation effects, efforts to increase perceived subjective similarity would also likely increase liking.

To see if participants' willingness to give their phone numbers depended on I-sharing condition, I ran a Chi-Square difference test layered by Me-similarity condition. I found no significant main effect of I-sharing condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 144) = 1.71, p = .19$. Layered by Me-similarity condition, I found no significant effect of the I-sharing manipulation in the dissimilar-Me condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 46) = 1.37, p = .24$, and No Me Information condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 48) = .37, p = .55$. I did, however, find a marginally significant effect of the I-sharing manipulation on phone number giving again for participants in the similar-Me condition, $\chi^2(1, N = 50) = 3.17, p = .07$, Cramer's $V = .25$.

In terms of participants in the similar-Me condition, 85 percent of participants whom I randomly assigned to watch the videos together gave their phone number, as compared to 63 percent of those who watch the videos separately. See table 1 again for proportions for all cells.

To see if the I-sharing intervention affected time devoted to talking, I ran a 2 (I-sharing condition: Fostered I-sharing vs Comparison) X 3 (Me-sharing condition: Dissimilar-Me, Similar-Me, or No Me Information) ANOVA with allotted talking time as the dependent variable. There was no main effect of I-sharing condition on time devoted to talking ($F(1, 138) = .01, p = .92$), or of Me-sharing condition on time devoted to talking ($F(2, 138) = .743, p = .74$). There was, however, a marginally significant interaction effect ($F(2, 138) = 2.54, p = .08$). Time allocation scores varied widely ($M = 5.49, SD = 2.68$); a large number of individuals (19; 13.2 percent) assigned either the maximum or minimum possible value. As the maximum and minimum values were only roughly two standard deviations from the mean, and the data failed normality tests (e.g. Shapiro-Wilk = .945, $df = 144, p < .001$) I used Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U tests instead of t-tests to test simple effects of I-sharing condition across Me-sharing conditions (see LaMorte, 2016; PROPHET, 1997). A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that, for participants in the *similar-Me* condition, median talk time was again marginally significantly greater for participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition (Mdn = 6 minutes) than for participants in the comparison condition (Mdn = 5 minutes), $U = 226.5, N = 50, p = .09$. In addition, a Mann-Whitney U test indicated that, for participants in the No Me Information condition, median talk time was unexpectedly marginally

significantly greater for participants in the comparison condition (Mdn = 6 minutes) than for participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition (Mdn = 5 minutes), $U = 198$, $N = 48$, $p = .06$. No significant difference between I-sharing conditions appeared for participants in the dissimilar-Me condition, $U = 231$, $N = 46$, $p = .47$. (As an aside, if instead of using a Mann-Whitney U test, I used t-tests after removing the 19 minimum and maximum value assigners, then statistically significant results appeared for all marginally significant time allocation results I reported in this paragraph.)

Ancillary Analyses

As the effect of the I-sharing manipulation on perceived subjective similarity was smaller than expected, and previous research has shown existential isolation to play a pivotal role in I-sharing effects (see Pinel et al., 2006), I used PROCESS Model 1 moderation (Hayes, 2013), controlling for dummy coded Me-similarity condition, to test whether existential isolation influenced the effect of the I-sharing manipulation on perceived subjective similarity. Results showed a significant effect of I-sharing condition, $b = .30$, $t(139) = 2.32$, $p = .02$, and also showed a significant effect of existential isolation, $b = -.21$, $t(139) = -2.43$, $p = .02$. As research suggests that I-sharing increases interpersonal attraction in existentially isolated individuals the most (see Pinel et al., 2006), one might wonder whether the I-sharing intervention likewise also affected perceived subjective similarity the strongest for those who scored high on levels of existential isolation. Although no significant interaction effect occurred $b = .07$, $t(139) = .60$, $p = .7$, examination of the Johnson-Neyman technique showed that, on the contrary, the effect of the I-sharing manipulation on subjective similarity only existed for

individuals who were *not* high on existential isolation. Unlike participants not high in existential isolation, participants in the top 30 percent of existential isolation scores showed no significant effect of the I-sharing manipulation [see Figure 1]). This suggests that the I-sharing manipulation failed to produce feelings of I-sharing with the population it may have the most influence on - existentially isolated individuals.

One might also wonder whether other subject factors related to the Me that naturally varied between participants (such as gender) affected perceived subjective similarity or interacted with my I-sharing or Me-similarity manipulation to affect perceived subjective similarity. For instance research shows that females pick up on emotional cues more easily than men do (see Collignon, Girard, Gosselin, Saint-Amour, Lepore, & Lassonde, 2010), and express emotions more often (Jansz, 2000; Kring & Gordon, 1998). Given this, it might be that the I-sharing manipulation more strongly affected female-female dyads as they might pick up on, and give off more, nonverbal emotional cues.

To investigate whether gender affected my subjective similarity results, I ran my previous 2 (I-sharing condition: Fostered, Comparison) X 3 (Me-similarity condition: Me-similar, Me-dissimilar, No Me Info) ANOVA with an additional subject factor of whether the dyad did not have a male in the dyad (the female-female dyads) or had a male in the dyad (the male-female dyads, and male-male dyads). I did such an analysis rather than a full factorial as 64% of my dyads were female-female and I did not have enough male-male dyads to run a full factorial. If the I-sharing manipulation were more effective with females, then one would expect an I-sharing condition by “male in dyad”

interaction such that there would be bigger differences between the I-sharing and comparison condition in the female-female dyads than in the dyads that included a male. Results showed the previous significant I-sharing, $F(1, 132) = 4.29, p = .04, \eta^2 = .03$, and Me-similarity results, $F(2, 132) = 3.48, p = .03, \eta^2 = .05$. The I-sharing by “male in dyad” interaction was not significant, $F(1, 132) = .135, p = .71$, nor were any other interactions. This suggests the intervention was not more effective for female-female dyads. The means also trended in the opposite direction such that the mean reported perceived subjective similarity differences were greater for participants in a dyad with at least one male (Difference = .47; I-sharing: $M = 3.8, SD = .79$; Comparison: $M = 3.33, SD = 1.01$) than for participants in female-female dyads (Difference = .2; I-sharing: $M = 3.83, SD = .71$; Comparison: $M = 3.63, SD = .75$). Examining the simple I-sharing effect just for females in the female-female dyads did not show a significant effect, $t(90) = .132, p = .18$, likely at least in part due to a lack of power and a smaller than expected main effect. The simple I-sharing effect of just participants in the male-female dyads showed a marginally significant I-sharing intervention effect $t(50) = 1.87, p = .07, d = .52$, with, as reported above, participants in dyads with a male reporting more subjective similarity in the I-sharing condition than the comparison condition.

To examine gender a different way I also examined whether males and females differed in the mixed dyad pairs. As *partner* gender confounds any conclusions about *participant* gender one could obviously not conclude one way or another regarding whether the I-sharing manipulation is better or worse for males or females. Such an analysis, however, would help determine whether an effect of gender occurs at all.

Selecting just *male-female* dyads I ran a 2 (I-sharing condition) X 3 (Me-similarity) X 2 (Participant Gender: Male, Female) ANOVA with perceived subjective similarity as the dependent variable. No significant I-sharing condition X Gender effect occurred, $F(1, 30) = .1, p = .75$. The mean reported perceived subjective similarity differences were roughly the same for males (Difference = .25; I-sharing: $M = 3.94, SD = .76$; Comparison: $M = 3.69, SD = 1.07$) and females (Difference = .27; I-sharing: $M = 3.44, SD = .85$; Comparison: $M = 3.17, SD = .86$). This again suggests that I-sharing intervention affected males and females similarly. All of these gender results combined make it unlikely that the I-sharing manipulation I tested is more effective in females than in males.

In the mixed-dyad analyses, however, a marginally significant *main* effect of gender, appeared, $F(1, 30) = 3.16, p = .09, \eta^2 = .1$, such that males overall perceived more subjective similarity from females ($M = 3.8, SD = .94$), than females did from males ($M = 3.29, SD = .85$). This gender difference, along with other differences in the Me, likely added noise. This likely made finding a significant effect of the I-sharing manipulation more difficult than in previous I-sharing research where researchers withheld information on these other Me variables.

One also might wonder whether my I-sharing manipulation or Me-similarity manipulation affected other variables such as mood, and attentiveness to one's partner. Might the disagreement in the dissimilar-Me condition, or the lack of feedback in the No Info condition lead participants to be in a worse mood? I ran a 2 (I-sharing condition: Fostered, Comparison) X 3 (Me-similarity condition: Me-similar, Me-dissimilar, No Me

Info) ANOVA with a one item mood question included in my manipulation checks (“I am in a good mood”) as the dependent variable. No significant I-sharing main effect ($F[1, 138] = .09, p = .76, \eta^2 = .001$), or interaction effect appeared ($F[2, 138] = .5, p = .61, \eta^2 = .007$). Results did, however, show a marginally significant effect of my Me-similarity condition ($F[2, 138] = 2.37, p = .097, \eta^2 = .03$). Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed a marginally significant difference between participants in the No Me Info, and Me-dissimilar condition ($p = .09$) such that Me-dissimilar participants ($M = 4.72, SD = .83$) reported being in a marginally significantly better mood than participants in the No Info condition ($M = 4.31, SD = 1.01$). No significant differences appeared for participants in the Me-similar condition ($M = 4.54, SD = .81$) and the other two me-similarity conditions.

One might also wonder whether participants attended to their partner more in the I-sharing condition than the comparison condition. As the researcher both told participants that they were *not* watching the same videos in the comparison condition, and participants could not see what the other person was watching in the comparison condition (and thus participants would have no reason to try to validate their experience through the other participant’s reaction), one would expect participants to attend to, or care about the other participant’s response more in the I-sharing condition than the comparison condition. I ran the same 2 (I-sharing condition) X 3 (Me-similarity condition) ANOVA instead now with a one item attentiveness to response question (i.e., When watching the videos, how much did you pay attention to, or care about the other participant’s response) as the dependent variable. Not surprisingly participants reported

paying attention to the other participant's response marginally significantly more in the Fostered I-sharing condition ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.8$) than participants in the comparison condition, ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 2.29$), $F(1, 138) = 3.03$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .02$. No significant Me-similarity effect ($F[2, 138] = .04$, $p = .97$, $\eta^2 = .001$), or interaction effect appeared ($F[2, 138] = .23$, $p = .8$, $\eta^2 = .003$).

Discussion

In the study presented here, participants randomly assigned to the proposed I-sharing intervention reported more feelings of subjective similarity than participants in the comparison condition. This finding suggests that experiencing novel and emotionally evocative stimuli that elicit predictably similar responses with another does indeed foster a sense of I-sharing. A lack of interpersonal main effects, however, should temper one's enthusiasm. I did not find an overall main effect of I-sharing on liking or on the interpersonal behavior measures. These findings thus only partially support my hypotheses that watching novel and emotionally evocative stimuli in a context where one can experience each other's experience will promote both I-sharing and subsequent interpersonal connection.

Although the results of this study provide some encouragement, the effect size of the I-sharing technique on subjective similarity was smaller than expected. Despite participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition reporting significantly more perceived subjective similarity than participants in the comparison condition, in regards to mean labels the increase was only to a point of "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" in the Fostered I-sharing condition. This smaller than anticipated effect surely reduced the overall

effectiveness of the intervention. In other words the I-sharing intervention did not increase perceptions of perceived subjective similarity to a level that one would expect to strongly influence interpersonal attraction or interpersonal behavior. Without creating a situation where an individual believes another experiences the world similarly, one would not expect significant effects for liking or interpersonal behavior.

The reason for this weak perceived subjective similarity effect may lie in some notable differences between the current study and previous experimental I-sharing manipulations. For one, previous experimental manipulations controlled the information exchanged by having ostensible participants in separate rooms. In the current study, participants had time to evaluate each other on all of the variables one can glean from first impressions (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). All of this added noise, including noise from how objectively similar or dissimilar participants naturally were (e.g. gender) would statistically make finding an effect harder due to increased standard deviations. For instance results showed that in mixed gender pairs males perceived more subjective similarity of females than females did of males. The added noise of all these potential Me factors might have lowered the effectiveness of the I-sharing manipulation as all of these other potentially interpersonally relevant factors might have competed for attention with the I-sharing manipulation. How much participants valued of the topic they wrote about might have also created noise. Controlling for how much participants valued the topic they wrote about as a covariate, and topic chosen as an additional fixed factor, however, did not alter ANOVA results. It is definitely possible though that the added noise of this Me-sharing manipulation might have still interfered with greater feelings of

I-sharing. The Me-sharing manipulation may have also potentially created a topic confound as participants in the similar-Me conditions wrote about Marijuana legalization and Transgender Bathroom privileges more than participants in the dissimilar-Me and No Me Info conditions. Running liking analyses after removing participants who wrote about these topics, however, showed the same similar-Me liking results despite the loss of power.

In terms of additional differences between the current study and past research, previous I-sharing researchers also made a concerted effort in experiments to disentangle I-sharing from Me-sharing by providing participants with clear I information that disagreed with Me-sharing information. Experimental I-sharing manipulations provided written multiple-choice question feedback that made I implicating reactions unambiguous. In doing so, researchers provided participants with definitive information that the Me-sharing information did not also correspond to similar 'I's.

The I-sharing fostering technique used here (natural reactions to the videos), however, likely created more ambiguity of I similarity than previous manipulations. Individuals may not have been able to read each other's reactions fully based solely on facial reactions. On a one-item manipulation check that measured how much participants stated they were "able to infer the other participant's reactions to videos," although participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition reported significantly higher ability to infer reactions than those in the comparison condition $t(142) = 4.45, p < .001$, participants in the Fostered I-sharing condition still reported fairly low scores, with a mean of 3.4, an average in between labels of somewhat disagree (3) and somewhat agree

(4).

The room for potential uncertainty left by the I-sharing manipulation used here may have created a situation where participants, instead of fully looking to the I-sharing manipulation for similarity information regarding the I, instead may have partially looked to Me-sharing information to estimate overlap of reactions. The clear Me-sharing information, on a Me-sharing factor that one might expect to also predict I-sharing (values), may have in some ways overshadowed the I-sharing manipulation in regards to predicting subjective similarity. Partially in line with this, results showed that the Me-sharing manipulation did indeed influence feelings of subjective similarity as well.

In addition, the potential ambiguity of responses in the I-sharing manipulation may have led certain individuals – i.e., individuals high in existential isolation – to not make the connection that they experienced the short films similarly when in fact they did. Indeed, other data suggest that existentially isolated individuals assume that other individuals whom they just met, experience, and will experience, stimuli differently (Huneke & Pinel, in prep; Pinel, Johnson, & Long 2017). Existentially isolated individuals in the current study might have witnessed the ambiguous reaction cues and assumed that the other person experienced the short films differently. Existentially isolated individuals would then have concluded that the other person did not experience the videos similarly to them. When looking at the effect of the I-sharing manipulation across levels of existential isolation, I found participants lower in existential isolation showed subjective similarity effects of watching together, but more existentially isolated participants showed no effects. In experimental I-sharing research, where researchers

made subjective agreement largely undeniable, existentially isolated participants liked I-sharers the *most* (see Pinel et al., 2006; Pinel & Long, 2012). As I-sharing helps to combat existential isolation, one would likewise expect an I-sharing facilitating technique to help existentially isolated individuals overcome their feelings of isolation, and thus expect existentially isolated individuals to show the largest effects of an I-sharing fostering technique. The lack of success in producing feelings of I-sharing specifically in existentially isolated individuals in the current study surely diminished the overall impact of the intervention. Future researchers should aim to remove the uncertainty involved in the subjective experiences to help further facilitate I-sharing in existentially isolated individuals.

Talking after watching the videos may represent one means of increasing participants' certainty that they did indeed I-share. To pilot test this possibility, I had a group of sixteen participants undergo the same procedure as those in my Fostered I-Sharing/Me-Similarity condition, with one exception. These pilot participants received 5 minutes to talk with one another after they watched the videos. In this condition, participants liked their partner significantly more than did participants in the Me-similarity conditions described in the current paper. When examining the results with existential isolation as a moderator, I found these effects happened across levels of existential isolation, suggesting talking may potentially make the other person's experience less ambiguous. Importantly mediation analyses showed that perceived subjective similarity, controlling for objective similarity, strongly mediated the liking effect (with neither a 10000 sample bootstrapped confidence interval, nor a Preacher and

Kelly Kappa-squared CI that crosses zero, and the vast majority the effect of talking condition on liking explained by the indirect effect). Future research should further test such an intervention with a suitable talking control condition to further verify that such an effect stems from participants confirming their subjective agreement, rather than simply because talking in general improves interpersonal connection.

A second way of increasing participants' certainty that they are experiencing stimuli identically to their interaction partner would be to have participants answer multiple choice or yes/no reaction questions that individuals largely react similarly to after watching the videos. Similar to the manipulations used in past I-sharing research, participants could then switch answers, this time the answers being their actual answers rather than the fake computer generated ones previous experimenters used to manipulate I-sharing. Future research testing both of these forms of reducing reaction ambiguity could greatly improve the intervention.

In terms of other notable results, although the I-sharing manipulation did not overall affect interpersonal attraction and behavior, I did, however, find a significant effect of the I-sharing intervention on liking, and a marginally significant effect of it on interpersonal behavior measures for participants in the similar-Me condition. I did not find a significant interaction, so one certainly could not come to the full conclusion that the effectiveness of the I-sharing manipulation depends on level of Me-sharing. An I-sharing manipulation that produced a larger effect, however, might show such an interaction effect. As referenced earlier, providing unambiguous feedback would be one way to increase the power of the I-sharing manipulation. With a more powerful

manipulation one would be able to examine whether an interaction effect really does exist, or whether I-sharing increases interpersonal attraction and behavior across all levels of Me-similarity. Given the lack of an interaction effect, I thus only very loosely speculate as to why this Me-similarity (value agreement) might positively affect the interpersonal effectiveness of the I-sharing intervention. I provide three possible reasons why I potentially found I-sharing effects only in the Me-similarity condition below. First it could be the case that similarity on one aspect of the self might help to reaffirm the potential feelings of liking from similarity on the other aspect of the self. Thus Me-sharing might confirm one's liking inclinations after one has I-shared, and vice versa.

Second, participants in the similar-Me condition may have felt more comfortable examining each other's reactions, and so they might have picked up on more cues of subjective agreement in the Fostered I-shared condition. As referenced in the introduction, research suggests that individuals avoid sharing subjective experiences (Long, 2007), or opinions (Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005) with people they dislike. This effect may extend to people they lack information on, and thus individuals might have avoided even examining the reactions of the other participant in both of the non-agreement conditions. Unlike participants who did not receive any feedback, or participants who disagreed, participants in the similar-Me condition might have felt comfortable enough to examine each other's reactions. When given the opportunity to pick up on them in the Fostered I-sharing condition, participants with similar-Mes would then potentially have witnessed the similar reactions thereby improving interpersonal connection.

Lastly, I might have only found significant interpersonal results only in the similar-Me condition because individuals in the similar Me condition may have also felt more confident interpreting the other participants' reactions to the videos in the Fostered I-sharing condition as similar to their own. The previous value agreement (an aspect of the Me that might predict future I-sharing) could have made participants more certain that similar, but potentially ambiguous, subjective reactions really did entail I-sharing. As Me-sharing can also sometimes influence perceived subjective similarity (Marcus, Sakamoto, Virmani, & Pinel, 2013) and results showed the value-related Me-sharing manipulation I used in this study also influenced perceptions of subjective similarity, this value information may have also affected conclusions of I-sharing.

The interpersonal connection effects of the I-sharing intervention in the Me-Similarity condition may have some potential implications for individuals seeking to facilitate better relationships between individuals using I-sharing. Similarity in aspects of the Me that also strongly influence perceptions of subjective similarity (such as value agreement) may enhance the effectiveness of subsequent I-sharing, thereby helping to connect individuals. Despite I-sharing's proven interpersonal power, to harness it most effectively to bring individuals with value disagreements together (such as a staunch Democrat and ardent Republican), these results suggest one may both want to initially focus the individuals on an area of value agreement before experiencing stimuli together, and also make the subsequent subjective similarities undeniable. Therapists looking to use I-sharing to help couples reconnect (see Pinel, Bernecker, & Rampy, 2015) may similarly want to have clients initially discuss a topic of value agreement before utilizing

any I-sharing intervention. The investigation of whether, and under what contexts, an initial focus on shared values might improve any I-sharing intervention's efficacy definitely warrants further study.

In addition, researchers may want to investigate the effectiveness of *other* Me-sharing manipulations in facilitating I-sharing. Initial use of other Me-similarity manipulations that might even more strongly predict the I, such as preferences for specific political candidates or movies, might further feelings of subjective overlap and improve the effectiveness of an I-sharing manipulation. If I-sharing and Me-sharing might synergistically affect I-sharing, one may thus want to investigate the effectiveness of potentially improving I-sharing using a Me-similarity manipulation that might further implicate the I. In regards to overcoming Me differences, it is also possible that an I-sharing intervention may be more effective regarding overcoming less I-implicating Me differences (such as race) than more I-implicating Me differences (such as culture or religion). Research further examining the relationship between the Me and I could bear fruit.

Like all studies, this study is not, however, without its limitations. Although I included the No Me Information condition as a pseudo control condition for the Me-sharing manipulation, the lack of any information may have negatively influenced participants as well. Theory and research suggests that individuals have a desire to match their opinions with others (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). In the No Me Information condition I had individuals write an essay on an important topic, but I provided no opportunity to discuss their beliefs with others and make efforts to "share reality" in this

way. This may have left participants less enthused about the other participant, or in a worse mood, compared to if they read the other participant's essay, perhaps influencing interpersonal results. When I examined a one-item mood question placed at the end of the experiment ("I am in a good mood") by agreement condition, I found that participants in the No Info condition reported marginally significantly less agreement with the good mood question than those in the dissimilar-Me condition. Complete lack of any feedback from others may have also made participants who also did not watch the videos together yearn for feedback, including perhaps feedback from talking with the other participant. Perhaps this contributed to why participants who received no feedback on the value essays, and who watched the videos separately, unexpectedly allocated, on average, a large number of minutes to talking despite not displaying other interpersonal connection effects.

Another limitation might lie in that the experiment also immediately began when the second participant arrived, so the participants did not have a chance to interact at all. As discussed before, one might feel uncomfortable examining the experiences of complete strangers with whom one has not interacted. Having a short introductory period may enhance the effects of the I-sharing manipulation across all conditions. When using such an intervention with couples one may not need this, but when used with strangers it could make the difference between a made or missed I-sharing connection.

Society would also benefit from further testing of I-sharing manipulations with couples. If couples already have a certain comfort level, then they might more readily pick up on moments of I-sharing. Couples may, however, have more fixed conclusions

about subjective similarity, and thus an intervention might not alter subjective similarity feelings as much as it might with strangers. Testing of future interventions with couples would help to answer some of these questions.

The fact that females also comprised a large subset of my sample represents another limitation. As research suggests that on average females pick up on emotional cues more easily than men do (see Collignon, Girard, Gosselin, Saint-Amour, Lepore, & Lassonde, 2010), and express emotions more often (Jansz, 2000; Kring & Gordon, 1998), it is possible that the I-sharing intervention without any modifications would be less effective in the general population than with the sample I procured. Results of gender analyses, however, did not support such an interpretation. The I-sharing intervention did not affect female-female dyads more than dyads that included a male. In addition, similar mean differences between the I-sharing and comparison condition occurred for both males and females in the mixed-dyad pairs. If gender differences on emotional expressiveness and non-verbal emotional intelligence did, however, affect the effectiveness of the I-sharing intervention despite the lack of results, then the previously mentioned *verbal* means of improving knowledge of the other's subjective experience (talking and the reaction questionnaire) should also counteract some of these potential advantages females might possess.

Another limitation lies in that my sample was also largely Caucasian (91.7% identified as white). When removing the noise of race and analyzing only same race dyads the same pattern of results as I reported earlier appeared. A problem with external validity might exist though. With the low numbers of minorities in my study, the results

might not extend across race. Future I-sharing intervention researchers should examine any I-sharing manipulation in a more racially diverse sample.

A final potential limitation lies in the I-sharing manipulation. Although the pilot study showed that individuals shared similar reactions to the stimuli, two of the short videos (Jinxy Jenkins & Lucky Lou and the Piano) provoked more similar reactions in participants than did the third (Chateau de Sable). Future researchers may want to investigate whether removing or replacing Chateau de Sable improves the efficacy of the manipulation. Removing the video would further improve the practicality of the manipulation by reducing the video timing in half (as Chateau de Sable lasted longer than the other two).

Conclusions

In the I-sharing intervention tested here, having participants watch novel and emotionally evocative videos that produce predictable responses in a context where they could experience each other's experience increased participants' I-sharing beliefs. For participants made to know of a value agreement, it also positively influenced interpersonal connection. Although practical due to the brief nature of the intervention and ease of setup, the intervention did not, however, demonstrate an ability to counteract negative forces (such as value disagreements) that work against connections in the real-world. Future I-sharing intervention researchers should continue to test whether an even more powerful I-sharing intervention might help to bridge some of these divides. When creating future I-sharing interventions researchers should learn from the current study and reduce the ambiguity of subjective responses. This study, however, provided an

important first step in creating a means of taking advantage of the benefits of I-sharing.
In a world ripe for applications of I-sharing, the intervention represents a promising, but certainly improvable, means of making I-contact.

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Table 1. Means for all dependent measures by condition

	Me-Condition			Total
	No Info	Dissimilar	Similar	
Subjective similarity				
I-sharing	3.85 (.63)	3.74 (.79)	3.87 (.79)	3.82 (.74)
Comparison	3.68 (.83)	3.13 (1.03)	3.72 (.61)	3.52 (.87)
Total	3.77 (.73)	3.45 (.95)	3.8 (.71)	3.67 (.81)
Liking (Summed)				
I-sharing	7.76 (1.12)	7.31 (.9)	8.04 (.66)	7.71 (.93)
Comparison	7.64 (1.1)	7.2 (1.34)	7.47 (.56)	7.44 (1.03)
Total	7.7 (1.08)	7.25 (1.11)	7.77 (.67)	7.58 (.98)
% giving phone number				
I-sharing	58.33%	79.17%	84.61%	74.32%
Comparison	66.66%	63.64%	62.5%	64.29%
Total	62.5%	71.74%	74%	69.44%
Minutes allocated for talking				
I-sharing	4.79 (2.13)	5.67 (3.32)	6.04 (1.9)	5.51 (2.53)
Comparison	6.17 (3.13)	4.86 (2.93)	5.33 (2.37)	5.47 (2.84)
Total	5.48 (2.74)	5.28 (3.13)	5.7 (2.15)	5.49 (2.68)
Objective similarity				
I-sharing	4.21 (.86)	3.84 (1.06)	4.26 (.68)	4.11 (.88)
Comparison	4.23 (.86)	3.17 (1.02)	4.14 (.61)	3.86 (.96)
Total	4.22 (.85)	3.52 (1.09)	4.2 (.64)	3.99 (.92)
Existential Isolation				
I-sharing	3.63 (.87)	3.49 (.64)	3.41 (.78)	3.51 (.77)
Comparison	3.56 (1.01)	3.5 (.74)	3.43 (.55)	3.5 (.78)
Total	3.59 (.93)	3.49 (.68)	3.42 (.68)	3.5 (.77)
Self-other overlap				
I-sharing	2.5 (1.29)	2.13 (.99)	2.5 (1.14)	2.38 (1.14)
Comparison	2.33 (1.55)	1.82 (.85)	2.29 (1.23)	2.16 (1.26)
Total	2.42 (1.41)	1.98 (.93)	2.4 (1.18)	2.27 (1.2)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are Standard Deviations.

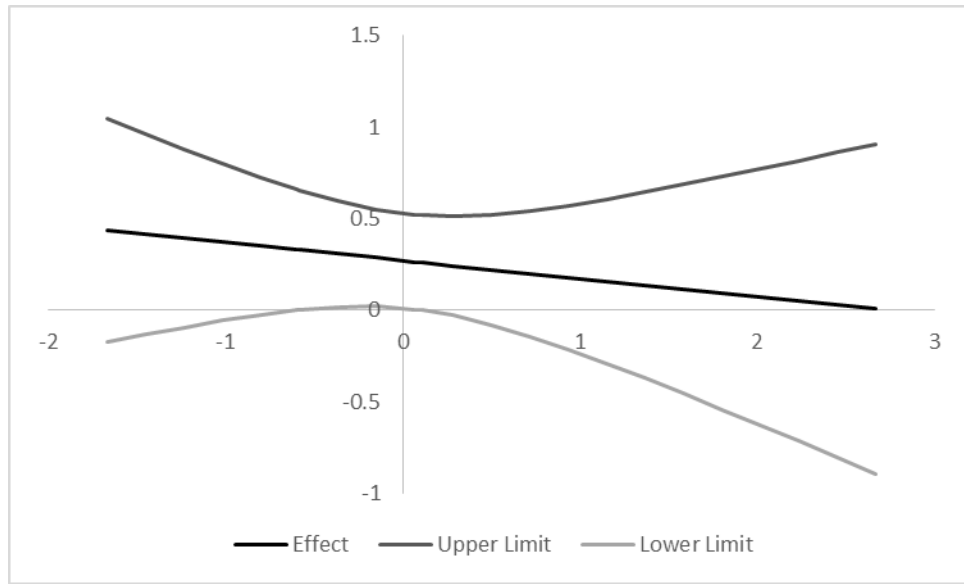


Figure 1: Conditional Effect of the I-sharing Manipulation on Perceived Subjective Similarity across levels of Mean Centered Existential Isolation

Appendix A

I believe that doctor's _____ be allowed to assist terminally ill patients in severe pain with suicide.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

I believe that buying and wearing animal fur _____ be made illegal.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

I believe that second trimester abortions (after the first three months) _____ be legal.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

I believe that individuals who enter this country illegally _____ be deported back to their home countries.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

I believe that Marijuana _____ be made legal in all 50 states.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

I believe if a person now identifies as the opposite sex to what they were originally born that the law _____ allow the person to use the bathroom of the new identified sex.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Should Not

Should

Appendix B

In the space below please write a paragraph discussing your opinion on the topic that the research assistant assigns you.



Appendix C

Jinx Jenkins & Lucky Lou- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6xb5PuG0f0>

Chateau de Sable - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYRu6MwmFYE>

The Piano - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZJDNSp1QJA>

Appendix D

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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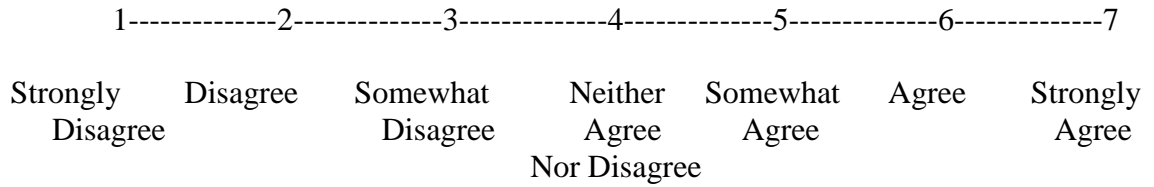
The other participant and I experience stimuli similarly.

The other participant and I see eye to eye when it comes to how we experience things.

The other participant and I differ quite a bit in our experiences of things.

The other participant and I **do not** experience stimuli similarly.

Appendix E



I believe the other participant and I potentially come from similar backgrounds.

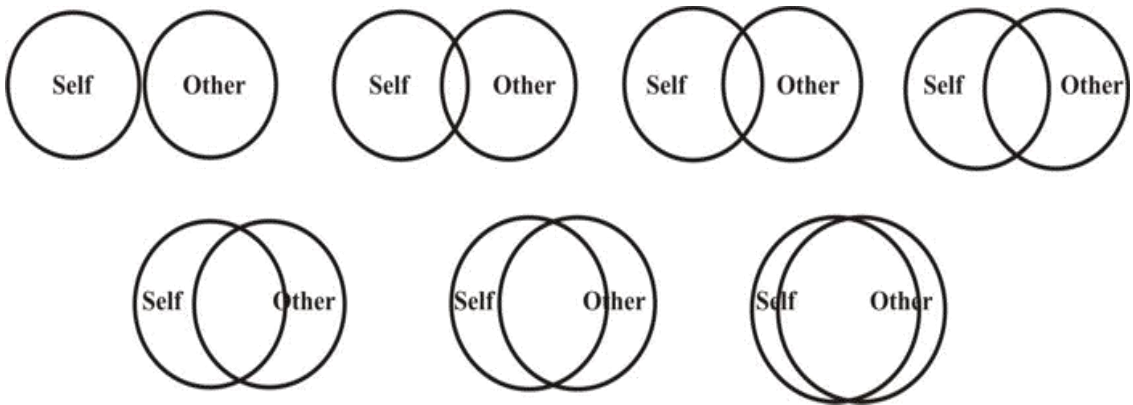
The other participant and I likely ascribe to the same groups.

The other participant and I likely have similar beliefs.

The other participant and I **do not** likely ascribe to the same groups.

Appendix F (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)

Instructions: Please select the picture that best describes your current relationship with the other participant.



Appendix G

Liking Questionnaire (first six items) (adapted from Pinel and Long, 2012b)

	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1.	I like the other participant.						
2.	I feel close to the other participant.						
3.	I could imagine becoming friends with the other participant.						
4.	I would want the other participant as a coworker.						
5.	I would potentially look forward to hanging out with the other participant in the future.						
6.	I feel positively about the other participant.						
7.	If the other participant needed help I would give it.						
8.	If I needed help the other participant would give it.						
9.	How similar do you feel your partner is to you?						
0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9							
Not at all							Extremely

Appendix H

The remaining 12 minutes of the study will consist of talking with the other participant, and surfing the internet on your own. Of the remaining 12 minutes of the study how many would you like to allot to surfing the internet?

How many of the remaining 12 minutes would you like to allot to talking with the other participant?

Appendix I

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender? 1=female 2=male 3=transgender
female 4=transgender male 5=other
3. Are you Hispanic or Latino? 1=Yes 2=No
4. What races apply to you from the following choices? (select all that apply)
1=Black or African American 2=White 3=Asian
4=American Indian or Alaskan Native 5=Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Appendix J

Existential Isolation Questionnaire

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree

1. I usually feel like people share my outlook on life.
2. I often have the same reactions to things that other people around me do.
3. People around me tend to react to things in our environment the same way I do.
4. People do not often share my perspective.
5. Other people usually do not understand my experiences.
6. People often have the same “take” or perspective on things that I do.

Appendix K Manipulation Checks

I was able to infer the other participant reactions to the videos during the video watching:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------

I knew how the other participant felt about particular scenes in the movies he or she was watching:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------

Did you and the other participant watch the same or different videos?

- A. The Same
- B. Different

Could you see the other person's video when watching the videos?

- A. Yes
- B. No

I value the topic that I wrote about:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------

When watching the videos, how much did you pay attention to, or care about the other participant's response

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9

Not at All	A lot
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The Sand Castle video was emotionally evocative...

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

The Piano video was emotionally evocative...

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

The Jinxy Jenkins and Lucky Lou video was emotionally evocative...

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

I had seen the Sand Castle video before coming here today:

- A. Yes
- B. No

I had seen the Piano video before coming here today:

- A. Yes
- B. No

I had seen the Jinxy Jenkins and Lucky Lou video before coming here today:

- A. Yes
- B. No

I am in a good mood.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree