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"The Causal Nexus between Relationship Dissolution and Psychopathological Symptomatology" or "I Just Can't Sleep after My Divorce" By David Kenny

One of the things that makes our field fascinating yet simultaneously challenging is that we study topics that everyone "knows." There was an article on the difficulty of doing research in education entitled "Everyone went to high school." The comparable article for us would be "Everyone has been in a relationship." One problem created by all of us being relationship experts is that the terminology that we use can be very confusing. There is a tension between using terms that lay people use versus inventing new terms (aka, jargon) so as to avoid the potential misunderstandings that arise in the use of lay terms.

I think that sometimes we are tempted to create jargon to prove, likely more to ourselves than to others, that we really know something. We equate being incomprehensible with saying something important. We forget the nominal fallacy: Giving something a

name does not in and of itself provide any real understanding.

You may be surprised to hear that I was once told that I was getting myself in trouble by using lay terms. Yes me, the person who wrote the following sentence "If the one-cue, differential weight model were correct, then the INSCAL analysis would yield a single dimension" was accused of writing too simply. I was advised many years ago by a senior researcher to avoid using lay terms as people will too easily think they know what the term means but not really know. While there is a risk in using lay terms, I think there is a benefit to building on lay notions. Yes, they eventually come to mean something very different, but by using lay concepts we make clear that we are studying something fundamentally important and human. Note that physicists still use terms like "energy," "mass," and "velocity," even though these terms now have very little to do with the lay use of those terms. I see it as a challenge to use lay terms but show how their meaning changes as relational science makes advances.

Let us consider a specific example. What if Hazan and Shaver had not used the terms "secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent" (of course, I know they borrowed these terms) for attachment styles, but instead to avoid "confusion" they invented their own terms. So for instance, they might have come up with "equilibrant, fugalant, and petalant" in terms of intimacy seeking. Are not we lucky that they did not invent such jargon! As another

example, I cannot understand why social network researchers continue to call people "nodes" and "vertices." I realize that not all networks refer to people, but when they are used to study relationships they always do.

One can make the argument that the use of jargon reinforces a "western bias." How so? Because most jargon has Latin or Greek roots (e.g., Psychopathological Symptomatology), it reinforces the Western-centrism. In the spirit of reducing jargon in our field, I list the titles of papers published in either the two journals or cited by a paper in one of those journals and my proposed less "jargony," yet hopeless silly translation. With apologies to the authors, here we go:

Original: "The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and construction of satisfaction in close relationships." Revised: "You will be a lot happier not knowing what the jerk is really like."

Original: "Associations of maternal and paternal direct differential behavior with siblings relationships: Contemporaneous and longitudinal analyses." Revised: "I used to and still hate my brother thanks to mom and dad."

Original: "Memory structures for relational decay: A cognitive test of sequencing de-escalating actions and stages." Revised: "Breaking up is not hard to do."

Original: "Heterogeneity of peer rejected boys: Aggressive and non-

aggressive subtypes." Revised: "Boys everyone hates are either bullies or dweebs."

Original: "Intimacy and the magnitude of experience of episodic relational uncertainty within romantic relationships." Revised: "Crap happens."

Original: "The influence of relational context on support processes: Points and difference and similarity between young adult sons and daughters in problem talk with mother." Revised: "When you need help, ask mom."

Original: "Sexual strategies theory: An evolutionary theory on human mating." Revised: "Darwin made me be a male chauvinist pig."

Original: "Mothering in context: Ecological determinants of parent behavior." Revised: "Your mom may be nice to you in public, but she is gonna whip your ass at home."