

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG ADULT COMMITTED DATING
RELATIONSHIPS**

by

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Abstract

Background: Individuals who promote and hold strong romantic beliefs also have greater expectations that an ideal relationship would conform to their standards. Unmet expectations in a relationship can lead to overall negative life satisfaction. There are various methods as to which individuals establish and maintain these committed dating relationships.

Objective: We aim to determine if young adults at ECU are creating committed dating relationships and what steps are being taken to establish them.

Methods: Young adults (N = 195) completed a Qualtrics survey including questions about demographic information, relationship status, appropriate actions, transitional events, and overall satisfaction. The survey was analyzed based on sex (males (64) and females (131)) as well as relationship status (single (93), talking (33), or dating (69)).

Results: Independent sample t-test were run to examine the differences among groups. Dating individuals had the highest satisfaction rates in their relationship compared to those single or talking. Talking and single individuals seemed to be in the most agreement upon a 1-6 month talking stage. There was great variation in what was appropriate in the talking stage between the single, talking, and dating individuals. Male participants had little to no variation in results when asked about that is appropriate during the talking stage compared to female participants. There was also little variation in what caused a relationship to transition from the talking stage to a committed dating relationship between all groups.

Conclusions: The talking stage generally ranges from 1-6 months in a young adult's life. Having an individual's talking partner invite them to a formal, committed dating relationship seems to be the most agreed upon event for transition.

Keywords: relationships, young adults, satisfaction, talking stage

Introduction:

In stage 6 of Eric Erickson's Psychosocial Development model, a young adult will form strong connections with others if their needs are met yet will become lonely and isolated if not. This being said, unmet relationship and commitment expectations are often associated with poor relationship outcomes. Evidence supports the fact that unmet romantic expectations can quickly become challenging for a partnership. Individuals who find their relationship falling short of their expectations or standards of idealness report much lower relationship commitment and satisfaction towards their partner (Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2017).

Older generations may believe that dating is an essential part of an individual's life in order to find a partner to commit to and fulfill for the rest of their lives. However, it has been found that dating is actually not a significant piece of the marriage process where individuals are looking for a partner to marry and cherish for the rest of their lives. On the contrary, within the young adult community on a college campus dating is seen as growing your social status rather than finding a partner and committing (Timothy & Sampson, 2020). The romantic relationship process of dating has dramatically shifted from previous generations, mostly related to the emergence of communication technology in our culture rather than a shift in ideology or social norms. (Rapplelea, Taylor, Fang, 2014). Going on dates has been found to simply be the idea of exploring an individual's options in partners before committing whereas previously, dating was the final commitment.

The resources for finding a partner have not only expanded to the Internet but expanded to the convenience of an individual's mobile phone. It is believed that the rise

in use and acceptance of dating apps has been triggered by the focus of building a career in an individual's early use as users claim to need an efficient convenient and digitally advanced option to connect with the community around them and form lasting romantic relationships (Stoicescu, 2019). In general, females were more likely to find it acceptable to hang out and exchange regular text and email messages prior to beginning a committed romantic relationship. In contrast, males were more likely to find it acceptable to share intimate details, engage in "sexting" conversations, become Facebook official, engage in sexual experiences, and moving in together prior to being in a committed romantic relationship. (Taylor, Rappleyea, Fang, Cannon, 2013)

There are various articles that have been written about the world of dating, online dating culture, and the stage of life that young adults go through when looking for a committed romantic relationship. However, not much of this research has been focused on the general process of going from dating to a stage of commitment in young adults. By researching this process, we gain insight into the mindset, values, and goals of young adults within their relationships. This study will explore the concept of forming committed dating relationships within the young adults on a college campus. We will address the process of building human connections within a college community and further help to understand the value and overall process through committed dating relationships. The following research questions were examined:

- What is your current relationship status?
- How satisfied are/were you?
- What activities are most appropriate during a talking relationship?

- When do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship?
- What is the minimum length of time a “talking” couple should be in a “talking relationship” before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?

Methods:

Participants (N = 195) were recruited through various HDFS 1103 classes targeting undergraduate students currently attending ECU. An online Qualtrics survey was distributed in Canvas to these classes. Students were given two weeks to take the survey, as well as invite a peer of a different gender or race to complete the survey. After the survey was closed, results were exported into SPSS statistics. SPSS is a statistical software suite used for various purposes including data management and analysis. Data was cleaned by removing incomplete surveys and any married responses as there was not sufficient information from married individuals to complete an impactful analysis. In addition, a missing data analysis was completed.

The survey was developed by the investigators based on the previous research process used by Taylor et al. (2013). After giving consent to participate in this study, respondents were initially asked several demographic questions (i.e., sex, age, year in school, race...). The remaining survey questions were based on these four research question areas: “How satisfied were you in your most recent talking relationship?”, “In my talking relationship I thought it was appropriate to...”, “In your opinion, when do most people who are in a ‘talking’ relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship?”, and “What is the minimum length of time a ‘talking’ couple should be in a ‘talking relationship’ before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?”. As part of the survey, participants were asked to

identify their sex (male, female, non-binary/third gender, transgender female, transgender male, or self-described) and relationship status (single, talking, dating, or married). Those who identified being in talking & dating relationships were asked about their current partner relationship. Those who reported that they were currently single were asked to report answers based on their most recent talking/dating relationship.

As part of our analysis, the demographic questions were examined and analyzed to accurately describe the survey sample. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare male and female groups as well as differences among relationship statuses.

Participants were mostly between the ages of 20-23 (61.46%) with 131 females and 64 males. 44 of the participants were freshmen (22.9%), 61 were sophomores (31.8%), 52 were juniors (27.1%), 34 were seniors (17.7%), and 4 were graduate students (2.6%). Out of the participants surveyed there was great variation in relationship status. 93 (48%) of the participants are currently dating while 33 (16%) are currently talking, and 69 (34%) are currently single (not talking or dating). All study procedures were approved by East Carolina University's IRB prior to collecting data (UMCIRB 23-000183).

Results

Relationship Satisfaction:

Of the individuals surveyed, it was determined that dating (82) individuals seem to be the most satisfied in their relationships (92.13%) while those who are single (22) were the least satisfied in their most recent talking relationship (38%). 70% of the talking individuals (21) and 51% of the single individuals (27) also reported to be satisfied in their relationship. About 17% of the talking individuals (5) reported to be dissatisfied as well as approximately 4.5% of the dating individuals (4). Of these groups, 3.37% of dating (3), 13.33% of talking (4), and 16% of single (9) individuals reported to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A T-test was run to determine variations in male and female satisfaction rates in their most recent or current relationship. There was significant variation in the male and female responses (p-value: 0.002) relating to their relationship satisfaction within their talking and dating relationships.

Figure 1.1: Satisfaction scale

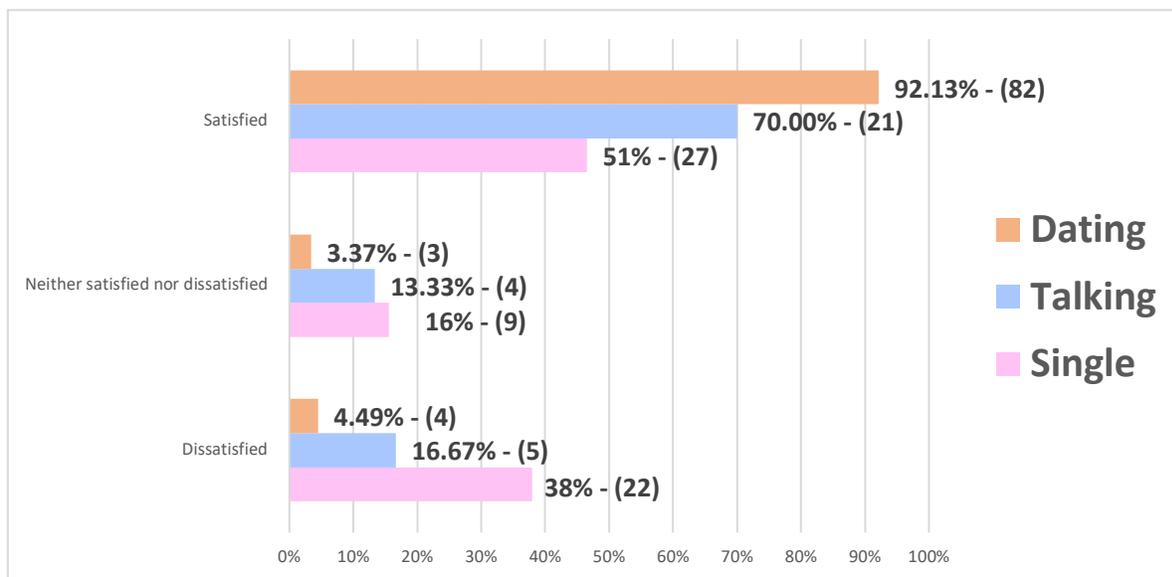


Figure 1.2: Male vs. Female satisfaction T-test Results

		Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
How satisfied were you in your last talking or dating relationship?	Equal variances assumed	9.696	.002	-5.733	174	<.001	<.001	-1.044	.182	-1.404	-.685
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.226	81.274	<.001	<.001	-1.044	.200	-1.442	-.647

Appropriate during the talking stage:

When comparing the 3 groups of single, talking and dating there was great variation in results. Between the single and talking individuals there was significant variation in events such as having the person you are talking to spend time with family (p-value: 0.014) and touching the person you are talking to sexually (p-value: 0.010). Between the talking and dating individuals there was significant variation in events such as having phone conversations with the person you are talking to (p-value: 0.024), having face to face conversations (p-value: 0.002), talking to other people while in a talking relationship (p-value: 0.067), touch the person I am talking to sexually (p-value: 0.023) and sharing emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to (p-value: 0.021). The single individuals compared to the dating individuals had the greatest amount of variation in events such as having phone conversations (p-value: <0.001), set relationships rules/boundaries (p-value: 0.090), have oral sex (p-value: 0.005), talk to other people while in a talking relationship (p-value: 0.038), electronically sext the person I am talking to (p-value: 0.086), go on dates with the person I am talking to (p-value: 0.017), and share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to (p-value: 0.046).

Overall, male participants had little to no variation in results when asked about that is appropriate during the talking stage compared to female participants. Some events that had

significant variation include having phone conversations (p-value: <0.001), having oral sex (p-value: 0.014), sexting (p-value: 0.106), sexually touching the other person (p-value: 0.156), and sharing feelings/emotions (p-value: 0.149).

Figure 1.3: Single vs Talking- What is appropriate? T-test results

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p				
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have phone conversations with the person I am "talking" to	Equal variances assumed	.647	.424	-.426	86	.336	.671	-.109	.256	-.619	.400
	Equal variances not assumed			-.436	62.636	.332	.664	-.109	.250	-.610	.391
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Hang out with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.170	.681	.984	83	.164	.328	.208	.211	-.212	.627
	Equal variances not assumed			.961	48.046	.171	.341	.208	.216	-.226	.642
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.476	.228	-1.085	86	.140	.281	-.360	.332	-1.019	.299
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.128	65.346	.132	.263	-.360	.319	-.997	.277
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.016	.899	.039	86	.484	.969	.010	.265	-.517	.538
	Equal variances not assumed			.038	56.487	.485	.969	.010	.269	-.529	.549
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Share personal details with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.011	.917	3.840	86	<.001	<.001	1.010	.263	.487	1.533
	Equal variances not assumed			3.769	55.841	<.001	<.001	1.010	.268	.473	1.547
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family	Equal variances assumed	6.268	.014	.854	84	.198	.395	.250	.293	-.332	.832
	Equal variances not assumed			.911	70.915	.183	.365	.250	.274	-.297	.797
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Set and follow relationship rules or boundaries with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.182	.671	-.504	86	.308	.615	-.140	.278	-.693	.412
	Equal variances not assumed			-.525	65.506	.301	.601	-.140	.267	-.674	.393
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Have face to face conversations with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.944	.334	.458	86	.324	.648	.102	.223	-.341	.546
	Equal variances not assumed			.449	55.626	.327	.655	.102	.228	-.354	.558
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.004	.949	-.762	86	.224	.448	-.164	.216	-.593	.264
	Equal variances not assumed			-.771	60.736	.222	.443	-.164	.213	-.591	.262
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Have oral sex with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.067	.305	-.321	86	.375	.749	-.110	.344	-.794	.573
	Equal variances not assumed			-.330	63.431	.371	.743	-.110	.335	-.779	.558
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Talk to other people while in a "talking" relationship	Equal variances assumed	.009	.923	-2.774	86	.003	.007	-.753	.271	-1.292	-.213
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.767	58.358	.004	.008	-.753	.272	-1.297	-.208
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Accompany the person I am "talking" to while running errands	Equal variances assumed	.015	.903	.351	86	.363	.727	.098	.278	-.456	.651
	Equal variances not assumed			.355	60.862	.362	.724	.098	.275	-.452	.648
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Electronically "sext" the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	4.902	.029	-1.710	86	.045	.091	-.533	.312	-1.153	.087
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.796	67.296	.038	.077	-.533	.297	-1.126	.059
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.425	.516	-1.018	86	.156	.312	-.283	.278	-.835	.270
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.050	63.983	.149	.298	-.283	.269	-.821	.255
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends	Equal variances assumed	.094	.760	.564	86	.287	.574	.155	.275	-.392	.702
	Equal variances not assumed			.577	62.453	.283	.566	.155	.269	-.382	.693
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Go on dates with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.075	.785	1.855	86	.034	.067	.522	.281	-.037	1.081
	Equal variances not assumed			1.854	58.684	.034	.069	.522	.281	-.041	1.085
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Touch the person I am talking to sexually	Equal variances assumed	6.970	.010	-1.539	86	.064	.128	-.448	.291	-1.027	.131
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.665	72.707	.050	.100	-.448	.269	-.985	.088
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.266	.607	.869	86	.194	.387	.224	.258	-.289	.737
	Equal variances not assumed			.862	57.387	.196	.392	.224	.260	-.297	.745

Figure 1.4: Talking vs. Dating- What is appropriate? T-test results

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have phone conversations with the person I am "talking" to	Equal variances assumed	5.226	.024	-1.362	118	.088	.176	-.256	.188	-.627	.116
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.183	40.493	.122	.244	-.256	.216	-.692	.181
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Hang out with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.796	.374	-1.874	115	.032	.064	-.348	.186	-.716	.020
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.731	38.396	.046	.091	-.348	.201	-.755	.059
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.000	.988	1.100	118	.137	.274	.311	.283	-.249	.871
	Equal variances not assumed			1.092	49.145	.140	.280	.311	.285	-.262	.884
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.423	.517	-1.767	118	.040	.080	-.411	.233	-.872	.050
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.654	44.810	.053	.105	-.411	.249	-.912	.090
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Share personal details with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.423	.517	-1.767	118	.040	.080	-.411	.233	-.872	.050
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.654	44.810	.053	.105	-.411	.249	-.912	.090
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family	Equal variances assumed	2.530	.114	-3.499	118	<.001	<.001	-.922	.264	-1.444	-.400
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.768	57.066	<.001	<.001	-.922	.245	-1.412	-.432
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to - Set and follow relationship rules or boundaries with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.988	.322	-2.314	118	.011	.022	-.522	.226	-.969	-.075
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.223	46.609	.016	.031	-.522	.235	-.995	-.050
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Have face to face conversations with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	9.637	.002	-3.456	118	<.001	<.001	-.567	.164	-.891	-.242
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.811	37.555	.004	.008	-.567	.202	-.975	-.158
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.649	.106	-1.906	118	.030	.059	-.300	.157	-.612	.012
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.622	39.516	.056	.113	-.300	.185	-.674	.074
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Have oral sex with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.361	.246	.357	118	.361	.722	.100	.280	-.455	.655
	Equal variances not assumed			.337	45.516	.369	.737	.100	.296	-.497	.697
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Talk to other people while in a "talking" relationship	Equal variances assumed	3.424	.067	4.623	118	<.001	<.001	1.011	.219	.578	1.444
	Equal variances not assumed			4.143	42.153	<.001	<.001	1.011	.244	.519	1.504
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Accompany the person I am "talking" to while running errands	Equal variances assumed	.066	.798	-2.493	118	.007	.014	-.589	.236	-1.057	-.121
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.371	45.876	.011	.022	-.589	.248	-1.089	-.089
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Electronically "sext" the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.236	.269	1.287	118	.100	.201	.344	.268	-.186	.875
	Equal variances not assumed			1.304	50.884	.099	.198	.344	.264	-.186	.875
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.418	.519	.333	118	.370	.740	.078	.234	-.385	.540
	Equal variances not assumed			.323	47.414	.374	.748	.078	.240	-.406	.561
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends	Equal variances assumed	.098	.754	-.943	118	.174	.348	-.222	.236	-.689	.245
	Equal variances not assumed			-.916	47.429	.182	.364	-.222	.243	-.710	.266
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Go on dates with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.560	.112	-4.339	118	<.001	<.001	-.956	.220	-1.392	-.519
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.817	41.157	<.001	<.001	-.956	.250	-1.461	-.450
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to - Touch the person I am talking to sexually	Equal variances assumed	5.279	.023	1.956	118	.026	.053	.478	.244	-.006	.962
	Equal variances not assumed			2.044	53.869	.023	.046	.478	.234	.009	.946
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to - Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	5.492	.021	-2.839	118	.003	.005	-.578	.204	-.981	-.175
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.482	40.826	.009	.017	-.578	.233	-1.048	-.108

Figure 1.5: Single vs. Dating – What is appropriate? T-test results

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Have phone conversations with the person I am "talking" to	Equal variances assumed	15.865	<.001	-2.237	146	.013	.027	-.365	.163	-.687	-.043
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.076	92.718	.020	.041	-.365	.176	-.714	-.016
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Hang out with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.304	.582	-.989	146	.162	.324	-.141	.142	-.422	.140
	Equal variances not assumed			-.971	114.369	.167	.334	-.141	.145	-.427	.146
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.683	.104	-.204	146	.419	.839	-.049	.238	-.520	.422
	Equal variances not assumed			-.198	109.845	.422	.843	-.049	.245	-.535	.438
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.058	.305	-2.156	146	.016	.033	-.401	.186	-.768	-.033
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.116	114.065	.018	.037	-.401	.189	-.776	-.026
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Share personal details with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	.471	.494	3.242	146	<.001	.001	.599	.185	.234	.965
	Equal variances not assumed			3.191	115.229	<.001	.002	.599	.188	.227	.971
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family	Equal variances assumed	1.439	.232	-2.980	144	.002	.003	-.672	.226	-1.118	-.226
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.935	111.027	.002	.004	-.672	.229	-1.126	-.218
During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to – Set and follow relationship rules or boundaries with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.920	.090	-3.432	146	<.001	<.001	-.662	.193	-1.044	-.281
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.286	104.165	<.001	.001	-.662	.202	-1.062	-.263
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Have face to face conversations with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.650	.106	-3.435	146	<.001	<.001	-.464	.135	-.732	-.197
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.182	92.186	<.001	.002	-.464	.146	-.754	-.175
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.650	.106	-3.435	146	<.001	<.001	-.464	.135	-.732	-.197
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.182	92.186	<.001	.002	-.464	.146	-.754	-.175
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Have oral sex with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	7.946	.005	-.044	146	.483	.965	-.010	.237	-.479	.458
	Equal variances not assumed			-.042	104.657	.483	.967	-.010	.247	-.501	.480
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Talk to other people while in a "talking" relationship	Equal variances assumed	4.404	.038	1.434	146	.077	.154	.258	.180	-.098	.614
	Equal variances not assumed			1.371	103.411	.087	.173	.258	.188	-.115	.632
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Accompany the person I am "talking" to while running errands	Equal variances assumed	.235	.629	-2.520	146	.006	.013	-.491	.195	-.876	-.106
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.445	109.452	.008	.016	-.491	.201	-.889	-.093
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Electronically "sext" the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.997	.086	-.831	146	.204	.407	-.189	.227	-.638	.260
	Equal variances not assumed			-.808	110.346	.210	.421	-.189	.234	-.652	.274
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	2.731	.101	-1.044	146	.149	.298	-.205	.196	-.593	.183
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.010	108.202	.157	.315	-.205	.203	-.607	.197
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends	Equal variances assumed	.650	.421	-.343	146	.366	.732	-.067	.196	-.454	.320
	Equal variances not assumed			-.333	110.595	.370	.739	-.067	.201	-.466	.331
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Go on dates with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	5.818	.017	-2.370	146	.010	.019	-.434	.183	-.795	-.072
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.244	99.939	.014	.027	-.434	.193	-.817	-.050
In a talking relationship it is appropriate to – Touch the person I am talking to sexually	Equal variances assumed	1.544	.216	.138	146	.445	.890	.030	.214	-.393	.452
	Equal variances not assumed			.133	107.501	.447	.894	.030	.221	-.409	.468
In our "talking" relationship I thought it was appropriate to – Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to	Equal variances assumed	4.049	.046	-2.114	146	.018	.036	-.354	.167	-.684	-.023
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.007	100.863	.024	.047	-.354	.176	-.703	-.004

Figure 1.6: Male vs. Female – What is appropriate? T-test Results

Coupling Event	Male (N = 64)	Female (N = 131)	P-value
Have phone conversations with the person I am talking to	3.72	4.03	<0.001
Hang out with the person I am talking to	3.98	4.00	0.719
Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to	3.23	3.31	0.227
Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to	2.91	3.07	0.855
Share personal details with the person I am talking to	3.85	3.12	0.5
Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family	2.33	2.65	0.271
Set and follow relationship rules or boundaries with the person I am talking to	3.28	3.80	0.21
Have face to face conversations with the person I am talking to	4.11	4.38	0.794
Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to	4.11	4.44	0.36
Have oral sex with the person I am talking to	3.15	3.23	0.014
Talk to other people while in a talking relationship	1.87	1.94	0.655
Accompany the person I am talking to while running errands	3.02	3.23	0.964
Electronically sext the person I am talking to	2.47	2.79	0.106
Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to	3.55	3.74	0.415
Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends	3.72	3.65	0.570
Go on dates with the person I am talking to	3.72	3.82	0.399
Sexually touch the person I am talking to	3.57	3.63	0.156
Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to	3.74	3.92	0.149

Transition events:

Between single and talking individuals there was not any significant variation in events that transition a talking relationship to a formalized committed dating relationship. Between the

talking and dating individuals there was significant differences in transition events - such as after talking for a certain period of time (p-value: 0.117) and having your partner invite YOU to a formalized committed dating relationship (p-value: <0.001). The single and dating individuals had the greatest amount of variation in results. The events with significant differences included after talking for a certain period of time (p-value: 0.013), after you invite your partner to a formalized committed dating relationship (p-value: 0.003), after you and your partner meet each other's family's (p-value: 0.054) and after saying "I love you" for the first time (p-value: 0.082). Overall, between males and females, there was also little variation or significant differences in what caused a relationship to transition from the talking stage to a committed dating relationship. Some events that presented significant differences include talking for a certain period of time (p-value: 0.145) and posting on social media/announcing to the public (p-value: 0.139).

Figure 1.7: Single vs Talking – When do individuals transition from a talking relationship to formalized committed dating relationship? T-test results

		Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After "talking" for a certain period of time	Equal variances assumed	2.500	.117	1.989	117	.025	.049	.254	.128	.001	.506
	Equal variances not assumed			2.002	47.938	.025	.051	.254	.127	-.001	.508
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having non-sexual contact (kissing, cuddling, etc.) with the person you are talking to	Equal variances assumed	.003	.958	1.789	116	.038	.076	.275	.154	-.029	.579
	Equal variances not assumed			1.672	44.964	.051	.102	.275	.165	-.056	.606
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	.228	.634	.076	118	.470	.940	.011	.146	-.279	.301
	Equal variances not assumed			.072	45.676	.471	.943	.011	.154	-.299	.322
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	13.626	<.001	-3.071	118	.001	.003	-.489	.159	-.804	-.174
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.446	36.745	.010	.019	-.489	.200	-.894	-.084
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public	Equal variances assumed	.694	.406	.915	117	.181	.362	.182	.199	-.212	.576
	Equal variances not assumed			.861	45.249	.197	.394	.182	.211	-.244	.608
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you and your partner meet each other's family	Equal variances assumed	.837	.362	1.209	118	.115	.229	.222	.184	-.142	.586
	Equal variances not assumed			1.115	43.830	.136	.271	.222	.199	-.180	.624
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After spending a certain amount of time in public	Equal variances assumed	.002	.963	1.307	118	.097	.194	.222	.170	-.114	.559
	Equal variances not assumed			1.275	47.746	.104	.209	.222	.174	-.128	.573
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After saying "I love you" for the first time	Equal variances assumed	.124	.725	.539	118	.296	.591	.111	.206	-.297	.519
	Equal variances not assumed			.525	47.620	.301	.602	.111	.212	-.315	.537

Figure 1.8: Talking vs Dating – When do individuals transition from a talking relationship to formalized committed dating relationship? T-test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After "talking" for a certain period of time	Equal variances assumed	.243	.623	-.321	84	.375	.749	-.048	.149	-.344	.248
	Equal variances not assumed			-.336	64.035	.369	.738	-.048	.142	-.332	.236
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having non-sexual contact (kissing, cuddling, etc.) with the person you are talking to	Equal variances assumed	.354	.553	-1.306	85	.098	.195	-.233	.179	-.589	.122
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.297	58.037	.100	.200	-.233	.180	-.593	.127
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	.597	.442	1.057	85	.147	.293	.156	.148	-.138	.450
	Equal variances not assumed			.987	48.947	.164	.329	.156	.158	-.162	.474
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	1.195	.277	-.977	85	.166	.331	-.204	.208	-.618	.211
	Equal variances not assumed			-.924	50.781	.180	.360	-.204	.220	-.646	.239
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public	Equal variances assumed	1.195	.277	-.977	85	.166	.331	-.204	.208	-.618	.211
	Equal variances not assumed			-.924	50.781	.180	.360	-.204	.220	-.646	.239
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you and your partner meet each other's family	Equal variances assumed	.276	.601	-1.106	85	.136	.272	-.242	.219	-.677	.193
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.100	58.324	.138	.276	-.242	.220	-.682	.198
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After spending a certain amount of time in public	Equal variances assumed	.417	.520	-.899	85	.186	.371	-.156	.174	-.502	.189
	Equal variances not assumed			-.862	52.747	.196	.392	-.156	.181	-.519	.207
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After saying "I love you" for the first time	Equal variances assumed	1.001	.320	-2.165	85	.017	.033	-.509	.235	-.976	-.042
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.190	60.976	.016	.032	-.509	.232	-.973	-.044

Figure 1.9: Single vs Dating – When do individuals transition from a talking relationship to formalized committed dating relationship? T-test results

		Independent Samples Test				t-test for Equality of Means					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After "talking" for a certain period of time	Equal variances assumed	6.271	.013	1.923	145	.028	.056	.206	.107	-.006	.417
	Equal variances not assumed			1.868	107.932	.032	.065	.206	.110	-.013	.424
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having non-sexual contact (kissing, cuddling, etc.) with the person you are talking to	Equal variances assumed	1.024	.313	.333	143	.370	.739	.042	.125	-.205	.289
	Equal variances not assumed			.325	109.594	.373	.746	.042	.128	-.212	.296
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	.086	.769	1.528	145	.064	.129	.167	.109	-.049	.384
	Equal variances not assumed			1.569	129.408	.060	.119	.167	.107	-.044	.378
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed relationship	Equal variances assumed	9.070	.003	-5.569	145	<.001	<.001	-.692	.124	-.938	-.447
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.215	94.608	<.001	<.001	-.692	.133	-.956	-.429
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public	Equal variances assumed	.146	.703	-.142	144	.444	.887	-.021	.151	-.321	.278
	Equal variances not assumed			-.144	124.174	.443	.886	-.021	.150	-.318	.275
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After you and your partner meet each other's family	Equal variances assumed	3.775	.054	-.132	145	.447	.895	-.020	.150	-.317	.277
	Equal variances not assumed			-.128	106.381	.449	.898	-.020	.155	-.328	.288
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After spending a certain amount of time in public	Equal variances assumed	.683	.410	.505	145	.307	.614	.066	.131	-.192	.325
	Equal variances not assumed			.515	126.466	.304	.608	.066	.128	-.188	.320
In your opinion, when do most people who are in a "talking" relationship transition to a more formalized, committed, partner relationship – After saying "I love you" for the first time	Equal variances assumed	3.073	.082	-2.348	145	.010	.020	-.398	.169	-.732	-.063
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.302	111.455	.012	.023	-.398	.173	-.740	-.055

Figure 2.0: Male vs. Female – When do individuals transition from a talking relationship to formalized committed dating relationship? T-test Results

Transition Event	Male (N = 64)	Female (N = 131)	P-value
After talking for a certain period of time	3.19	3.11	0.145
After having non-sexual contact (kissing, cuddling, etc) with the person you are talking to	2.65	2.70	0.783
After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed relationship	3.40	3.31	0.513
After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed relationship	2.63	3.13	0.392
After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public	2.63	2.64	0.139
After you and your partner meet each other's family	2.85	2.90	0.323
After spending a certain amount of time in public	2.56	2.53	0.494
After saying "I love you" for the first time	2.50	2.89	0.211

Minimum length of the talking stage:

Between the single, talking, and dating individuals there was not much variation in the minimum length of time for a talking relationship. The single and dating individuals found 1-2 months to be an appropriate length of time for the talking stage. The talking individuals found 3-6 months to be the minimum length of time for the talking individuals. Overall, there were no significant differences between males and females (p-value: 0.123) when determining the minimum length of time for a talking relationship.

Figure 2.1: Single vs. Talking vs. Dating – What is the minimum length of time of the talking stage?

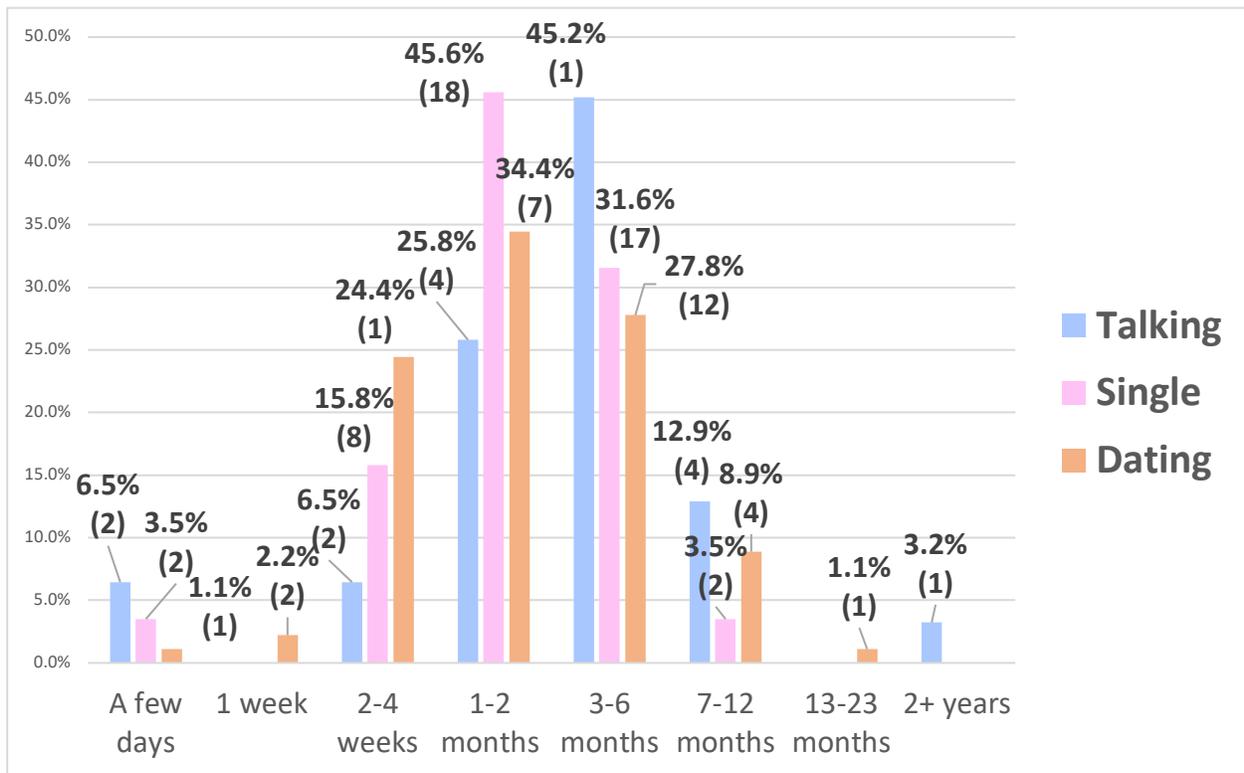


Figure 2.2: Male vs. Female – What is the minimum length of time of the talking stage? T-test Results

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
What is the minimum length of time a "talking" couple should be in a "talking relationship" before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?	Equal variances assumed	2.403	.123	-.560	174	.288	.576	-.099	.177	-.449	.251
	Equal variances not assumed			-.586	106.128	.280	.559	-.099	.169	-.435	.237

Discussion

Defining dating in today's society is becoming more and more difficult. Modern generations have been known to stop following the traditional dating course as there is now more freedom for individuals to define their relationships (Timothy & Sampson, 2020). This increased autonomy leads to an excess of "blurred lines" and miscommunications allowing for individuals to find themselves stuck in the "talking stage".

Satisfaction:

The results found in this study are consistent with the idea that satisfaction in a relationship leads to stronger committed dating relationship. Individuals are found to form strong committed partnerships if their needs are being met yet will become lonely and isolated if not (Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2017). Dating individuals were found to have the highest satisfaction in their relationship which makes sense as couples are more likely to transition to a committed dating relationship and maintain this stage if they are satisfied.

What is appropriate during the talking stage:

Within my study, single, talking, and dating young adults had various perspectives on what was appropriate when in a talking relationship. The single vs talking individuals, as well as the talking vs dating individuals, seemed to have more agreement on what was appropriate while the single and dating individuals had the most variation. While it seems that talking relationships are the more similar to dating relationships in today's dating society, my findings seem to contradict the idea that there is little to no commitment in the talking stage.

When do individuals transition from a talking relationship to a formalized committed dating relationship?

What is surprising about the findings in my study relating to transitioning from talking to dating is that the events that signified the beginning of a young adult committed dating relationship were consistent among males and females. Males and females tend to have different perspectives on intimacy and forming relationships. Typically, males tend to be more drawn to sexual intimacy while females are more driven by emotional intimacy. Both parties also agreed that certain sexual acts were not appropriate during the talking stage compared to others. Based on the results, having a conversation with the person you are talking to or talking for a certain period seems to be the most agreed upon events to transition from a formalized committed dating relationship.

What is the minimum length of time for a talking relationship?

According to the results from my study 1, 1-6 months seems to be the most agreed upon time frame for the minimum length of time for the talking stage. The single and talking individuals appear to skew results a little on the shorter side while the dating skewed results on the longer side. This could be for a variety of reasons; such as previous misconceptions, general miscommunications within the talking stage, or no prior experience with a talking stage. This finding contributes to the existing dating relationship (Knopp, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2020), as it helps scholars better understand the preferred lengths of time for those young adults in their talking relationships.

Future research:

Future research can be conducted to further analyze various demographics variables among talking and dating young adults. For example, future analysis could include comparing religiosity to relationship status as those who are more religious tend to be more conservative in their ideals compared to those that are not. In addition, it might be beneficial to examine diverse populations in more depth. It would be interesting to compare the “talking” experiences and preferences among different ethnic and racial groups. Other areas of research could include analyzing long-distance vs in person relationships, various sexual orientations, as well as relationships built from online dating versus those who met in person before “talking”.

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Appendix A: IRB approval

Notification of Exempt Certification

From Social/Behavioral IRB

:

To: Apoorva Mutyala

CC: Alan Taylor

Date: 2/28/2023

Re: UMCIRB 23-000183

The Development of Young Adult Committed Dating Relationships

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 2/28/2023. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 2a.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
Consent form updated(0.01)	Consent Forms
Recruitment announcement updated(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Survey updated(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Thesis Proposal.docx(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

Appendix B: Qualtrics Survey

Demographics block

1. Sex
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary/third gender
 - d. Transgender female
 - e. Transgender male
 - f. Prefer to self describe
 - i. ...
2. Sexual orientation
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Homosexual
 - c. Bisexual
 - d. Prefer to self describe
 - i. ...
 - e. Prefer not to say
3. Age
 - a. 18 - 19
 - b. 20 – 23
 - c. 24 – 26
 - d. Other
 - i. ...
4. Status in college – ECU Only
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate student
5. Race
 - a. White or Caucasian (Non-hispanic/Latino)
 - b. Black or African American (Non-Hispanic/Latino)
 - c. Hispanic/Latino/x
 - d. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - e. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - f. Other
 - i. ...

Research block

6. What is your current relationship status?
 - a. Single – not talking or dating
 - i. Have you been in a talking or dating relationship previously?
 1. Yes

- a. How long ago
 - i. Less than a month
 - ii. 2-less than 3 months
 - iii. 3- less than 6 months
 - iv. 6- less than 12 months
 - v. 1-2 years
 - vi. 3-5 years
 - vii. 5+ years
- b. How satisfied were you
 - i. Very satisfied
 - ii. Moderately satisfied
 - iii. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
 - iv. Moderately dissatisfied
 - v. Not satisfied at all
- c. During my most recent talking relationship it was appropriate to
 - i. Have phone conversations with the person I am “talking” to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
 - ii. Hang out with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
 - iii. Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
 - iv. Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
 - v. Share personal details with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never

2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- vi. Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- vii. Set and follow relationship rules/boundaries with the person I am talking to
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- viii. Have face to face communication with the person I am talking to
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- ix. Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- x. Having oral sex with the person I am talking to
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always
- xi. Talk to other people while in a “talking” relationship
1. Never
 2. On rare occasions
 3. Sometimes
 4. Regularly
 5. Always

- xii. Accompany the person I am “talking” to while running errands
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xiii. Electronically “sext” with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xiv. Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xv. Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xvi. Go on dates with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xvii. Touch the person I am talking to sexually
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always
- xviii. Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to
 - 1. Never
 - 2. On rare occasions
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Regularly
 - 5. Always

- d. In your opinion, when do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship
- i. After “talking” for a certain period of time
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - ii. After having non-sexual contact (kissing, cuddling, etc.) with the person you are talking to
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - iii. After having a sexual relationship with the person, I am talking to
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - iv. After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed partner relationship
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - v. After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed partner relationship
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - vi. After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - vii. After you and your partner meet each other’s family
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Agree
 4. Strongly agree
 - viii. After spending a certain amount of time in public
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree

- 3. Agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
 - ix. After saying “I love you” for the first time
 - 1. Strongly disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Agree
 - 4. Strongly agree
 - e. What is the minimum length of time a “talking” couple should be in a “talking relationship” before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?
 - i. A few days
 - ii. 1 week
 - iii. 2-4 weeks
 - iv. 1-2 months
 - v. 3-6 months
 - vi. 7-12 months
 - vii. 13-23 months
 - viii. 2+ years
- 2. No
 - a. Do you have any desire to be in one?
 - i. Yes
 - 1. In a talking relationship it would be appropriate to
 - a. Have phone conversations with the person I am “talking” to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
 - b. Hang out with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
 - c. Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always

- d. Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- e. Share personal details with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- f. Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- g. Set and follow relationship rules/boundaries with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- h. Have face to face communication with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- i. Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- j. Having oral sex with the person I am talking to

- i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- k. Talk to other people while in a “talking” relationship
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- l. Accompany the person I am “talking” to while running errands
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- m. Electronically “sext” with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- n. Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- o. Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- p. Go on dates with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly

- v. Always
- q. Touch the person I am talking to sexually
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- r. Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to
 - i. Never
 - ii. On rare occasions
 - iii. Sometimes
 - iv. Regularly
 - v. Always
- ii. In your opinion, when do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship? (1-4 Scale)
 1. After “talking” for a certain period of time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 2. After having non-sexual contact (kissing and cuddling) with the person you are talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 3. After having a sexual relationship with the person, I am talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 4. After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 5. After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - 6. After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - 7. After you and your partner meet each other's family
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - 8. After spending a certain amount of time in public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - 9. After saying "I love you" for the first time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - iii. What is the minimum length of time a "talking" couple should be in a "talking relationship" before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?
 - 1. A few days
 - 2. 1 week
 - 3. 2-4 weeks
 - 4. 1-2 months
 - 5. 3-6 months
 - 6. 7-12 months
 - 7. 13-23 months
 - 8. 2+ years
 - iv. No
 - 1. End of Survey
- b. Currently "talking"
 - i. How long have you been in this relationship?
 - 1. Less than a month
 - 2. 2-less than 3 months
 - 3. 3- less than 6 months
 - 4. 6- less than 12 months

5. 1-2 years
 6. 3-5 years
 7. 5+ years
- ii. What is the minimum length of time a “talking” couple should be in a “talking relationship” before moving into a more formalized committed partner relationship?
1. A few days
 2. 1 week
 3. 2-4 weeks
 4. 1-2 months
 5. 3-6 months
 6. 7-12 months
 7. 13-23 months
 8. 2+ years
- iii. How satisfied are you with the person you are talking to?
1. Very satisfied
 2. Moderately satisfied
 3. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
 4. Moderately dissatisfied
 5. Not satisfied at all
- iv. Level of intensity
1. Casual/getting to know someone
 2. Interested/Intensifying
 3. Exclusive/Intimate/Monogamous
- v. In a “talking” relationship I think it is appropriate to (1 – 5 scale)
1. Have phone conversations with the person I am “talking” to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 2. Hang out with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 3. Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 4. Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never

- b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
5. Share personal details with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
6. Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
7. Set and follow relationship rules/boundaries with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
8. Have face to face communication with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
9. Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
10. Having oral sex with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
11. Talk to other people while in a “talking” relationship
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly

- e. Always
- 12. Accompany the person I am “talking” to while running errands
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 13. Electronically sext with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 14. Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 15. Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 16. Go on dates with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 17. Touch the person I am talking to sexually
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 18. Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- vi. In your opinion, when do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship? (1-4 Scale)

1. After “talking” for a certain period of time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
2. After having non-sexual contact (kissing and cuddling) with the person you are talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
3. After having a sexual relationship with the person I am talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
4. After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
5. After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
6. After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
7. After you and your partner meet each other’s family
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
8. After spending a certain amount of time in public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
9. After saying “I love you” for the first time
 - a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- c. Currently “dating”
- i. How long have you been dating?
 - 1. Less than a month
 - 2. 2-less than 3 months
 - 3. 3- less than 6 months
 - 4. 6- less than 12 months
 - 5. 1-2 years
 - 6. 3-5 years
 - 7. 5+ years
 - ii. How satisfied are you in your current relationship?
 - 1. Very satisfied
 - 2. Moderately satisfied
 - 3. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
 - 4. Moderately dissatisfied
 - 5. Not satisfied at all
 - iii. In our “talking” relationship I thought it was appropriate to (1-5 scale)
 - 1. Have phone conversations with the person I am “talking” to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 - 2. Hang out with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 - 3. Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 - 4. Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 - 5. Share personal details with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never

- b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
6. Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
7. Set and follow relationship rules/boundaries with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
8. Have face to face communication with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
9. Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
10. Having oral sex with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
11. Talk to other people while in a “talking” relationship
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
12. Accompany the person I am “talking” to while running errands
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly

- e. Always
- 13. Electronically sext with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 14. Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 15. Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 16. Go on dates with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 17. Touch the person I am talking to sexually
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 18. Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- iv. In your opinion, when do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship?
 - 1. After “talking” for a certain period of time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
 - 2. After having non-sexual contact (kissing and cuddling) with the person you are talking to

- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
3. After having a sexual relationship with the person I am talking to
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
4. After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed partner relationship
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
5. After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed partner relationship
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
6. After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
7. After you and your partner meet each other's family
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
8. After spending a certain amount of time in public
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
9. After saying "I love you" for the first time
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- v. How long was your talking relationship before moving into a formalized committed partner relationship?
- 1. A few days
 - 2. 1 week

3. 2-4 weeks
4. 1-2 months
5. 3-6 months
6. 7-12 months
7. 13-23 months
8. 2+ years

d. Married

- i. How long have you been married?
 1. Less than a month
 2. 2-less than 3 months
 3. 3- less than 6 months
 4. 6- less than 12 months
 5. 1-2 years
 6. 3-5 years
 7. 5+ years
- ii. How satisfied are you in your current relationship?
 1. Very satisfied
 2. Moderately satisfied
 3. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
 4. Moderately dissatisfied
 5. Not satisfied at all
- iii. In our “talking” relationship I thought it was appropriate to (1-5 scale)
 1. Have phone conversations with the person I am “talking” to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 2. Hang out with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 3. Have sexual intercourse with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
 4. Engage in public displays of affection with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly

- e. Always
- 5. Share personal details with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 6. Have the person I am talking to spend time with my family
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 7. Set and follow relationship rules/boundaries with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 8. Have face to face communication with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 9. Tease and joke around with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 10. Having oral sex with the person I am talking to
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 11. Talk to other people while in a “talking” relationship
 - a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- 12. Accompany the person I am “talking” to while running errands
 - a. Never

- b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
13. Electronically sext with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
14. Direct message on social media with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
15. Introduce the person I am talking to, to my close friends
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
16. Go on dates with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
17. Touch the person I am talking to sexually
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
18. Share emotions/feelings with the person I am talking to
- a. Never
 - b. On rare occasions
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Regularly
 - e. Always
- iv. In your opinion, when do most people who are in a “talking relationship transition into a more formalized, committed, partner relationship?
- 1. After “talking” for a certain period of time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree

- d. Strongly agree
- 2. After having non-sexual contact (kissing and cuddling) with the person you are talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 3. After having a sexual relationship with the person I am talking to
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 4. After having your talking partner invite YOU to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 5. After YOU invite your partner to a formal committed partner relationship
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 6. After you post your partner on social media/announce them to the public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 7. After you and your partner meet each other's family
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 8. After spending a certain amount of time in public
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree
- 9. After saying "I love you" for the first time
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - d. Strongly agree

- v. How long was your talking relationship before moving into a formalized committed partner relationship?
1. A few days
 2. 1 week
 3. 2-4 weeks
 4. 1-2 months
 5. 3-6 months
 6. 7-12 months
 7. 13-23 months
 8. 2+ years