

Lack of intimacy prospectively predicts breakup.

Does lacking a meaningful connection to a romantic partner or being concerned with bad judgment from your partner predict a breakup and/or your emotional attachment in the time following said breakup?

Methods

4,105 participants in romantic relationships completed a battery of questionnaires outlined below:



All participants were asked about their perceptions of emotional connection (e.g., I feel closer to my partner than I've ever felt to anybody). and negative judgement from their partner (e.g., I worry about what my partner thinks of me), and relationship satisfaction.



Weekly they were asked about whether they were still together, and if not, who initiated the breakup if not a mutual decision.



Those who broke up were asked 27 days daily about to what extent they feel responsible for the breakup and about their emotional attachment to their ex (e.g., I am still in love with them).



Two months later these participants were again asked about their emotional attachment.

Results

Participants reporting greater emotional connectivity to their partner were **39% less likely to break-up** during the study, regardless of their concerns about negative judgment from their partner.

Emotional connectivity was also associated with ongoing emotional attachment to their ex following a breakup but often due to attachment insecurities (e.g., fears of abandonment or rejection) and low relationship satisfaction during the relationship.

In Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that perceiving a low meaningful connection with your partner increases the likelihood of breaking up, and to some degree, predicts better emotional adjustment if you were to break up. Being concerned with negative judgement from your partner on the other hand is not associated with such patterns.

The present results speak to the importance of having needs for intimacy met in a romantic relationship and strengthens past findings where people report intimate connection to be among the key reasons for staying in a relationship.