

The Role of Emotional Disclosure and Vulnerability in the Reconstruction of Marital Intimacy: A Qualitative Perspective


Karina. Batthyany¹, Thandiwe. Mokoena^{2*}

¹ Department of Psychology, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada



² School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

* Corresponding author email address: thandiwe.mokoena@wits.ac.za

Editor

Shahram Vahedi
Professor, Department of
Educational Psychology, Faculty of
Educational Sciences and
Psychology, Tabriz University,
Tabriz, Iran
vahedi117@yahoo.com

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Mohammad Hassan Ghanifar
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad
University, Birjand, Iran. Email: ghanifar@iaubir.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Mohsen Kachooei
Assistant Professor of Health Psychology, Department of Psychology, Humanities
Faculty, University of Science and Culture, Tehran, Iran. kachooei.m@usc.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The definition of intimacy—"closeness, openness, and connectedness"—is broad and not attributed. Please add a citation beyond Bradbury & Bodenmann (2020) to ground this conceptualization more precisely.

The description of purposive sampling is general. Clarify what inclusion/exclusion criteria were used. For example, did participants need to report prior intimacy challenges?

You mention diversity in socioeconomic backgrounds, but the sample demographics provided later suggest imbalance (majority employed, higher education levels). Discuss how this may bias results.

The statement "setting convenient and comfortable for the participant" needs elaboration. Were online interviews synchronous video calls? How were privacy and confidentiality ensured?

The quotation "I was raised to never cry..." highlights masculinity norms. However, the manuscript does not contrast this with female participants' experiences sufficiently. Consider deeper comparative analysis.

The link to "capitalization processes in distressed couples" (Hershenberg et al., 2016) is insightful but underdeveloped. Provide more explanation of how positive disclosures practically complemented vulnerability in your sample.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The authors state, “Studies indicate that when partners are able to articulate emotional injuries...they can move toward forgiveness and reconciliation.” This is accurate but vague. Please specify which study mechanisms (e.g., EFCT processes) empirically link disclosure to reconciliation.

The phrase “politics of vulnerable masculinity” is powerful, but no clear operational definition is provided. Expand on what this entails in practical therapeutic settings to strengthen the argument.

The authors conclude with “This study therefore aims to qualitatively explore...” but do not state a specific research question. Please formulate 1–2 explicit questions for clarity.

The phrase “This suggests that disclosure is not merely cathartic but actively restructures relational dynamics” is strong but requires citation beyond O’Brien et al. (2009). Please integrate at least one newer study to support this assertion.

The discussion on “politics of vulnerable masculinity” repeats the introduction. Condense the repetition and expand instead on therapeutic strategies for overcoming masculine resistance.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.