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Disclosing Romantic Relationship Conflicts with a Third Party: A Test of the Disclosure Decision-Making Model

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A TEST OF THE DISCLOSURE DECISION-MAKING MODEL

INTRODUCTION

For the past decade, Greene's (2009) Disclosure Decision-Making Model (DD-MM) has primarily been used to understand the process of disclosing a personal health issue (i.e., HIV, mental illness, cancer). Because self-disclosure plays such a large role in obtaining social support and increasing relational quality between individuals, there is much to consider when disclosing such personal information.

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Test whether the DD-MM translates to the new context of romantic relationship conflict (RRC) disclosures.
2. Understand how relational quality changes pre/post disclosure as individuals seek out social support from a third-party confidant about their RRC.

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QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Surveys via social media

- 81 participants (64 females, 16 males, 1 non-specified)
 - 81% White/Caucasian (n = 66)
- Participants identified as:
 - Currently being in a romantic relationship
 - Having experienced an RRC in that relationship within the past two months
 - Having disclosed the RRC to someone outside the relationship
- Questions focused on the experienced RRC, the participant's relational quality with their partner and confidant, and their disclosure practices.

RESULTS

- The DD-MM is valid for use in the context of RRCS with only minor adjustments.
 - Adds to the generalizability of the model
- There are positive associations between relational quality, perceived support, and disclosure efficacy.
- No significant change found in relational quality between the discloser and their romantic partner/confidant after the RRC disclosure.
- **New finding:** Relational quality with one's romantic partner was positively correlated with disclosure efficacy toward the confidant.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Is the Disclosure Decision-Making Model valid for use in romantic relationship conflict disclosure?

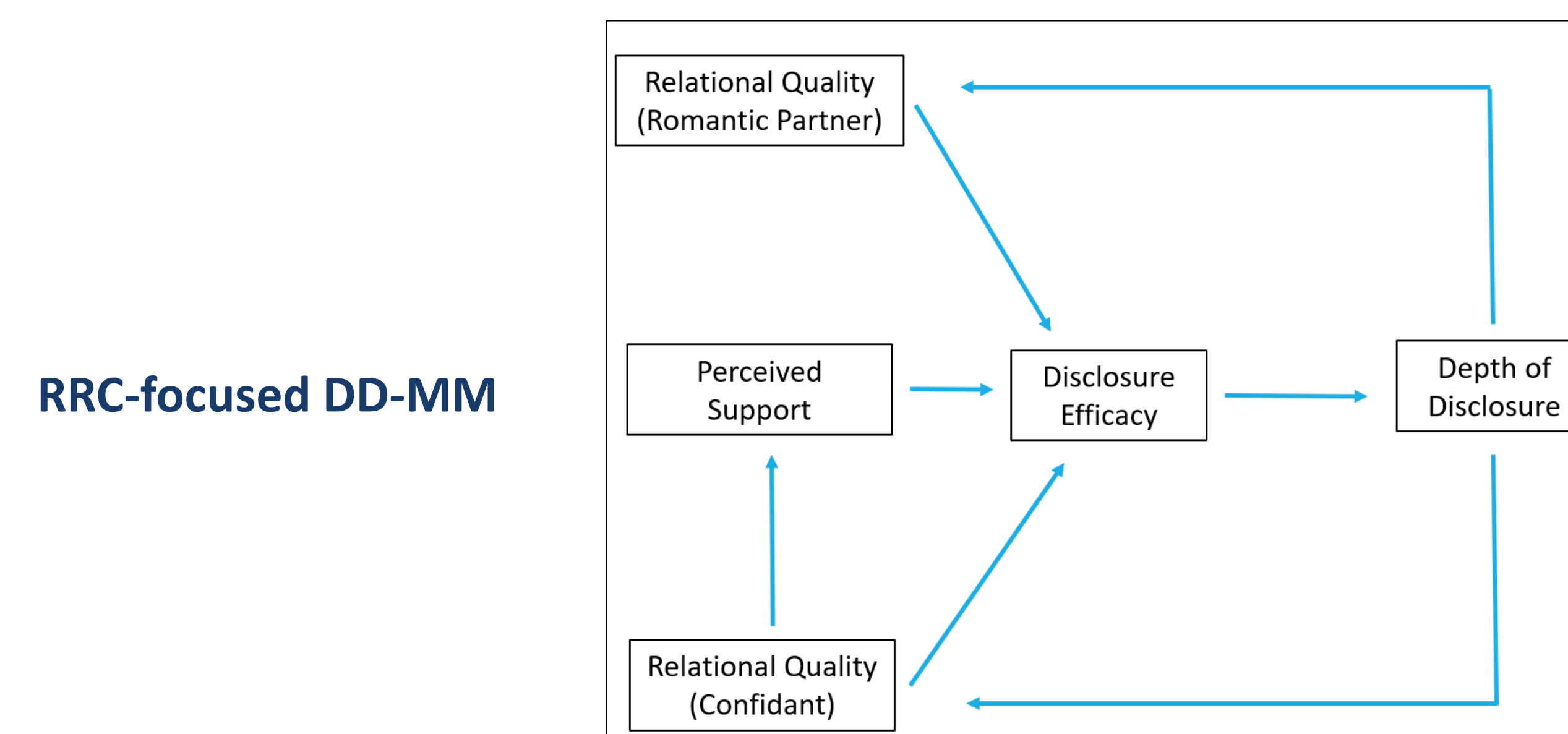
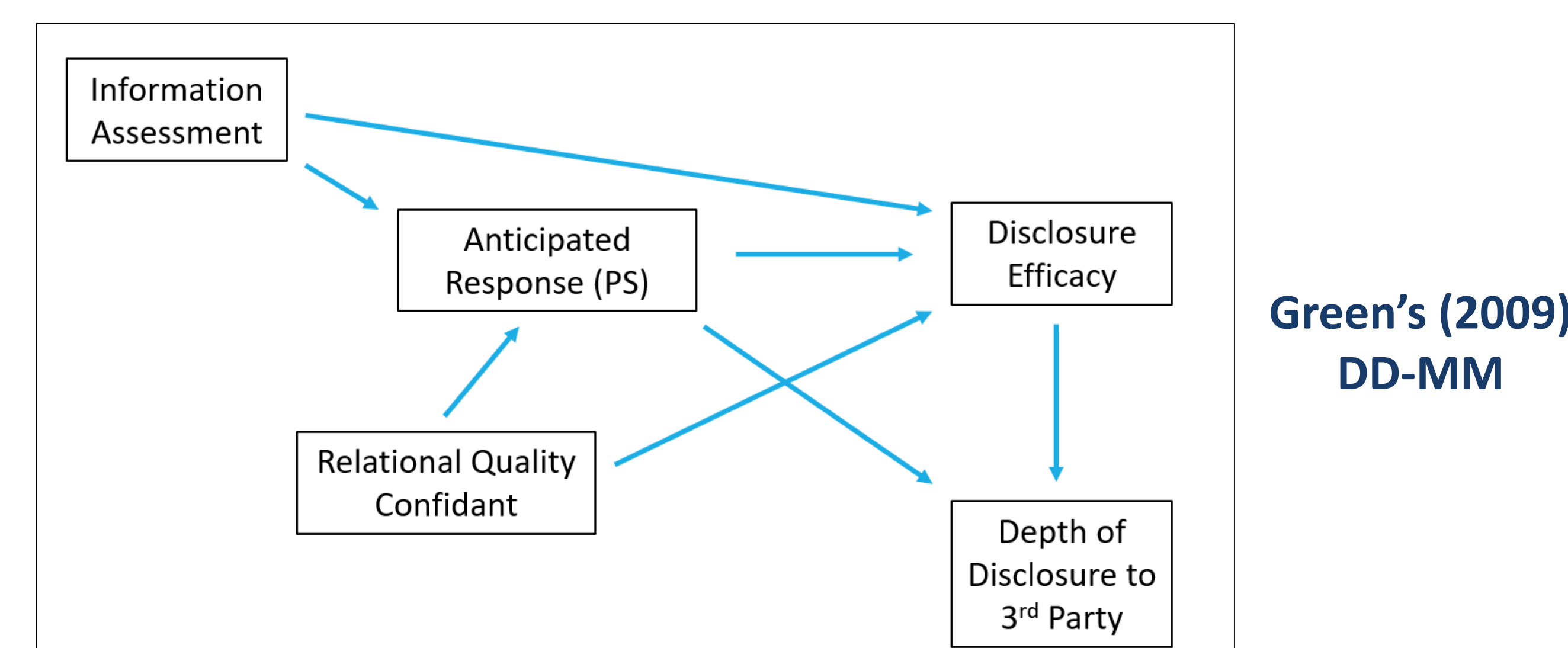
H1: Higher relational quality with a confidant is positively related to perceived support.

H2: Higher relational quality is positively related to disclosure efficacy toward the confidant.

RQ2: How does an RRC disclosure influence relational quality between discloser/confidant and discloser/romantic partner?

RQ3: How does *depth of disclosure* to the confidant influence relational quality between discloser/confidant and discloser/romantic partner?

MODELS



CONCLUSION

Take-aways for a discloser:

- When searching for a confidant, one may want to choose someone they anticipate receiving the most support from, which is often someone they have high relational quality with.
- More intimate disclosures are positively related to higher relational quality with the confidant.
- Be aware that while disclosing to a confidant may be helpful for support, it may also cause the confidant to "feel caught" in the middle of the RRC.

Take-aways for a potential confidant:

- Wants to be the recipient of deeper disclosures? A great way to do so is by showing a willingness to listen and offering signs of support!
- Support is a key aspect for enabling the disclosure process and for increasing personal well-being.

Limitations:

- Retrospective reporting
- Lack of triadic responses