TESTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DATING VIOLENCE

PREVENTION PROGRAM AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL

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TESTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Anıl Özge Üstünel Balcı, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;

- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;

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ABSTRACT

Testing the Effectiveness of a Dating Violence Prevention

Program Among College Students in Istanbul

Dating violence among college students is a psychological and social issue associated with serious academic, psychological and physical health risks. In Turkey, there has been no published work on any systematic effort or program for the prevention of dating violence in college samples. The present study aimed to fill this gap by implementing a dating violence prevention program to college students attending a university in Istanbul and employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate its effectiveness. A program was designed to promote equality, safety, mutuality and responsibility in dating relationships, informed by feminist clinical approaches. The program was pilot tested and implemented to five groups (47 participants) in eight weekly consecutive sessions between February-May 2017. In the quantitative part, a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with a control group (49 participants) was used to explore the program's effect on behavioral and attitudinal outcome measures. A series of ANCOVAs on posttest scores whilst controlling for pretest scores and relevant covariates showed no improvement in emotion approach coping, accommodative behavior, benevolent attitudes towards women, ambivalent attitudes towards men and attitudes towards psychological dating violence. The significant changes obtained in hostile attitudes towards women and in attitudes towards physical dating violence were promising. In the qualitative part, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the prevention groups to explore the processes which facilitated and hindered change. A constructivist

grounded theory approach was used. The present results showed that feminist clinical perspectives with skills-based components can provide a valuable guiding framework for future dating violence prevention efforts.

ÖZET

Bir Flört Şiddeti Önleme Programının İstanbul'daki Üniversite Öğrencileri

Arasında Etkinliğinin Sınanması

Üniversite öğrencileri arasında flört şiddeti, ciddi akademik, psikolojik ve fiziksel riskleri beraberinde getiren psikolojik ve sosyal bir sorundur. Türkiye'de flört şiddetini önleme konusunda üniversite öğrencilerine yönelik etkinliği sınanmış herhangi bir program bulunmamaktadır. Bu çalışma, İstanbul'daki bir üniversitenin öğrencilerine bir önleme programı uygulayarak ve bu programın etkinliğini karma yöntemlerle sınayarak literatürdeki boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışma kapsamında feminist klinik yaklaşımlara dayanarak bir flört şiddeti önleme programı geliştirilmiştir. Programın amacı flört ilişkilerinde eşitlik, güvenlik, karşılıklılık ve sorumluluk kavramlarını tanıtmak, şiddetin oluşmasını önlemektir. Program önce pilot olarak test edilmiş, daha sonra birbirini takip eden 8 haftalık oturumlar aracılığıyla Şubat-Mayıs 2017 arasında 5 gruba (47 katılımcı) uygulanmıştır. Kantitatif bölümde yarı-deneysel bir öntest-sontest dizaynı kullanılmış, kontrol (49 katılımcı) ve önleme grupları belirli davranış ve tutum ölçümlerinde karşılaştırılmıştır. Öntest puanlarını ve ilgili eş değişkenleri kontrol ederek sontest puanları üzerinde yapılan bir dizi ANCOVA analizi, programın duygularla başa çıkma ve uyum gösterme becerileri, kadınlara karşı korumacı cinsiyetçilik, erkeklere karşı çelişik duygulu cinsiyetçilik, psikolojik şiddete ilişkin tutumlar bakımından bir fark yaratmadığını göstermiştir. Buna karşın kadınlara karşı düşmanca cinsiyetçilikte ve fiziksel şiddete ilişkin tutumlarda anlamlı bir azalma olduğu görülmüştür. Kalitatif

bölümde, önleme gruplarındaki katılımcılarla yarı-yapılandırılmış bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerde amaç, değişimi kolaylaştıran ve zorlaştıran süreçleri araştırmaktır. Görüşmeleri analiz etmek için sosyal inşacı temellendirilmiş kuram analizi yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın bulguları, sonraki şiddet önleme çalışmaları için feminist klinik yaklaşımların ve beceri-temelli uygulamaların etkili olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

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Ustunel, A.O. & Fisek, G. O. (2013). A gendered perspective on Turkish couples' mental and physical well-being: exploring environmental, familial, dyadic and individual predictors (Poster Presentation), 8th European Family Therapy Association Congress, Istanbul-Turkey, 24-27 October 2013.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dating violence is a serious psychological and social issue influencing the lives of many adolescents and young adults (Murray & Kardatzke, 2007). Research shows that young people report high rates of dating violence perpetration and victimization across many countries (WHO, 2010) and in Turkey, ranging from 8-37 % for physical abuse, 2-10 % for sexual abuse and 43-86 % for psychological abuse (Aba, 2008; Arslan, 2002; Besni, 2011) and that experiences of abuse are associated with academic, psychological and physical health risks such as poor academic performance, depression, suicide attempts, post-traumatic stress, physical injuries, drug and alcohol use, sexually transmitted diseases, especially for females (Eshelman & Levendosky, 2012; Foshee, Reyes, Gottfredson, Chang, & Ennett, 2013; Teten, Ball, Valle, Noonan, & Rosenbluth, 2009; Oswalt, Wyatt, & Ochoa, 2018). Due to considerably high prevalence rates and serious consequences associated with dating violence, academics and non-governmental organizations have started to define violence between young couples as a high-priority issue and launched initiatives to take action towards systematically investigating and preventing it (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2012; WHO, 2010). In the United States, Canada and Europe, substantial attempts have been made to develop, implement and evaluate dating violence prevention programs which target middle school, high school and college students and aim to eliminate all forms of abuse in intimate relationships.

In Turkey, there has been no published work on any systematic effort or program for the prevention of dating violence in high school or college samples. The

1

present study aims to fill this gap by implementing a dating violence prevention program to college students attending a university in Istanbul and employs a mixed-methods approach to evaluate its effectiveness in improving emotional and relational skills and changing sexist and violence supportive attitudes, and to explore processes which facilitate and hinder change.

1.1 Dating violence: terms and definitions

Dating violence is defined as any behavior which aims to take control of the partner and/or harm the partner in a physical, sexual or psychological way (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Pittman, Wolfe, & Wekerle, 2000; Theirot, 2008; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999), and to inhibit or threaten the partner's integrity and development (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007). Dating violence involves a wide range of behaviors and has different forms. Physical dating violence, considered as the most visible and easily identifiable form of violence, refers to the use of physical force to intimidate, inflict pain or injure the partner in a dating relationship, such as pushing, shoving, attacking with a weapon (Shorey, Cornelius, & Bell, 2008). Sexual dating violence refers to the use of physical force, threats, manipulation and psychological coercion in the domain of sexuality with a dating partner and engaging in sexual activities without the consent of the partner, such as forcing to have sex, pressuring to perform sexual acts, restricting one's access to birth control, rape (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Murray & Kardatzke, 2007). Psychological dating violence, which is a less visible and identifiable form, refers to controlling, coercive and manipulative behaviors which attacks the partner's personal integrity, psychological well-being and sense of self-worth, such as constantly

monitoring the partner's whereabouts, restricting the partner's social relationships, degrading the partner, using verbally abusive language, punishing the partner, spreading rumors (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Murphy & Hoover, 1999). Recent work has introduced a new form to violence, called digital dating violence, which refers to use of electronic communication technologies to intimidate, control or emotionally harm the partner (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Reed, Tolman, & Ward, 2016).

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of dating. The type of relationships the term dating denotes are heterogeneous, ranging from a single date to a more committed and long-term relationship (Pittman et al., 2000). Murray and Kardatzke (2007) argue that a sense of interconnectedness and a shared feeling of affective and sexual intimacy between two partners differentiate dating from other close relationships such as friendships. Drawing upon their definition, the present study defines dating as any long or short-term romantic and/or sexual involvement with a partner. In the literature, the term dating violence is mostly used for non-married and non-cohabiting adolescent and younger couples while the term intimate partner violence is reserved for more committed relationships between older adults or married couples. Although some studies use the two terms interchangeably, the present study employs the term dating violence because it is a broad and comprehensive concept which covers and captures the diversity in the types and forms of partnerships, relationships and violence among young college students.

1.2 Prevalence and sex differences in dating violence in the college student population

The majority of research on dating violence focuses on heterosexual couples, explores the rates of perpetration and victimization, and inquires into sex differences in its occurrence. The prevalence of dating violence has been well documented in samples of high-school and college students (Jennings et al., 2017; Shorey et al., 2008) and recent work has started to investigate non-heterosexual and transgender (Dank, Lachman, Zweig, & Yahner, 2014; Reuter, Newcomb, Whitton, & Mustanski, 2017) and ethnically diverse samples (Oswalt et al., 2018). Although the measurement of dating violence is still a controversial issue, leading to variations in the reported rates of perpetration and victimization, most studies show considerably high estimates. One line of research grapples with the question of who perpetrates violence and who is victimized by it in dating relationships, takes a gender-based approach and points to gender symmetry in the perpetration of some forms of violence. In light of the literature on domestic violence where there is an undisputable power discrepancy on the basis of sex and the abuse of power by men, the findings of gender symmetry raises a lot of theoretical and methodological questions. Typological approaches enters this debate to differentiate different types of violence and typologies of abusers in an attempt to integrate and reconcile seemingly contradictory research findings in the literature. This section presents an overview of the prevalence research and discussions around the gender symmetry debate, and draws upon one typological approach which may offer a conceptual solution.

Available research evidence shows that physical dating violence is a relatively common experience for both men and women in college. Makepeace

(1981), the first researcher to investigate abuse in couple relationships between college students, found that 8-14 % perpetrated physically abusive acts such as pushing, slapping, while up to 50 % reported having an acquaintance that experienced physical partner abuse. In a more recent review, Shorey and colleagues (2008) reported that the perpetration of physical violence was estimated to occur in 20-37 % of dating couples. In another review, Stonard, Bowen, Lawrance, and Price (2014) found that the average prevalence rates for physical violence victimization were 20-25 %. Somewhat lower rates were reported in Turkish college student samples, with physical violence perpetration and victimization rates in males ranging from 10-12 % and 9-19 %, and in females ranging from 6-12 % and 8-15 %, respectively (Aba, 2008; Arslan, 2002; Besni, 2011). With regards to sex differences, some studies differentiate physical violence on the basis of its severity and report gender symmetrical perpetration rates for minor physical violence (Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005), higher perpetration rates by females for moderate physical violence, and higher perpetration rates by males for severe physical violence (Swan & Snow, 2002; Swan & Snow, 2006). Other studies also show similar rates of physical violence victimization in college men and women (Cercone et al., 2005; Oswalt et al., 2018).

Sexual dating violence in adolescent and college populations seems to be less common than physical dating violence and shows a gendered pattern (Shorey et al., 2008). Sexual abuse perpetration rates range from 1-2.5 % for females and 4-7 % for males, while the rates of sexual victimization in a dating relationship range from 26-33 % for females and 5-6 % for males (Stonard et al., 2014). Research shows that males are more likely to perpetrate sexual violence than their female partners (Swan & Snow, 2002; Swan & Snow, 2006). Lower rates with a similar sex difference are

reported in a Turkish sample, with 14 % of males engaging in a sexually abusive act towards their partners in the last year as opposed 2 % of females (Aba, 2008). Regarding sexual abuse victimization, females tend to report lower rates (4-6 %) as compared to males (around 10 %) in Turkish student samples (Aba, 2008; Arslan, 2008), which might be explained by the tendency to minimize and underreport experiences of sexual violence.

Psychological violence appears to be the most prevalent form of violence among young dating couples and yields the most consistent evidence of gender symmetry. Psychological abuse perpetration is more common in high school and college samples than physical and sexual violence (Murray & Kardatzke, 2007), with rates ranging from 28-95 % for females and 13-75 % for males (Stonard et al., 2014). Snow and Swan (2006) reported similar rates of males and females perpetrating emotional abuse. With regards to victimization, Stonard and colleagues (2014) found an average prevalence rate of 35-36 %. In Turkish college student samples, psychologically abusive acts such as insulting, swearing, threatening was perpetrated by 48-70 % of males and 41-79 % of females (Aba, 2008; Arslan, 2002) and against 41-85 % of males and females (Aba, 2008; Arslan, 2002; Besni, 2011), pointing to the commonality of psychologically abusive experiences by both sexes in hetero-sexual partnerships.

Existing evidence points to a pattern of mutual, bidirectional violence in dating relationships in adolescence and young adulthood, in contrast to adult and married samples where the perpetrator is usually male and the victim is female in the literature on domestic violence (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005; Pittman et al., 2000; Teten et al., 2009; Theriot, 2008; Wekerle & Wolfe, 2009) . Such findings of gender symmetry in some forms of violence have generated a great deal of discussion and

further research. While some researchers have questioned the validity of self-report measures and pointed to response-biases, suggesting that men may underestimate their abuse to make a positive impression and women may underestimate their victimization out of shame and guilt (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1998; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999) and criticized decreased emphasis on gender differences, gender roles and sexism (Reed, Miller, & Silverman, 2010), other researchers have argued that seeming similarity in perpetration and victimization rates do not imply similar concepts, experiences and motives (Dobash & Dobash, 2014). Cercone and colleagues (2005) indicated that despite similar rates of perpetration and victimization, female college students were more fearful of violent behaviors, especially of severe physical acts, as compared to males. Similarly, Holtzworth (2005) highlighted that female and male victimization were different in nature, with females reporting more fear and injury and manifesting more trauma symptoms associated with intimate partner violence. Other research demonstrated that the motive to control the partner was less prevalent (Swan & Snow, 2002) and the instrumental value of aggression was lower (Cercone et al., 2005) among female aggressors as compared to male aggressors.

Contradictory research findings about the nature of violence perpetration and victimization in intimate relationships and conflictual results about sex differences point to the fact that violence is a heterogeneous phenomenon. Typological approaches have originated as attempts to capture and explain this heterogeneity and propose different ways of conceptualizing and differentiating various forms of violence, with some focusing on the personality dimensions, attitudes and profiles of abusers and some exploring the characteristics of violence perpetrated such as its frequency, severity, effects (Capaldi & Kim, 2007; Carlson & Jones, 2010;

7

Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Swan & Snow, 2002). Although presenting a review of such typological approaches is beyond the scope of this section, the framework offered by Johnson and colleagues provides a valuable conceptual tool to make sense of the discrepancy in research findings in the marital and domestic violence field where we see many examples of abuse of power by men, and in the dating violence literature where the boundary between the female victim and the male perpetrator roles becomes blurred.

Taking a dyadic approach, Johnson and colleagues carry out a feminist analysis of intimate partner violence on the basis of community samples and agency reports, and propose two main types differentiated by the extent to which systematic coercive control and a general desire to take charge of the partner's life plays a role in the perpetration of violence, namely intimate terrorism (previously patriarchal terrorism) and situational couple violence (previously common couple violence) (Johnson, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2011). Intimate terrorism refers to a systematic and general relational pattern where the male partner repetitively uses physical force or coercive tactics such as using children, isolation, emotional abuse, and threats to dominate and control the female partner, while situational couple violence emerges in the context of a specific argument or topic and is not accompanied by coercive control tactics (Johnson 1995, 2006; Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Research shows that intimate terrorism and situational couple violence follow different trajectories, capture different experiences and show different patterns, with the former being perpetrated by men, resulting in serious injuries and debilitating mental health consequences for women, and escalating with time, and the latter being perpetrated at similar rates by men and women, showing no escalation with time and representing the most common form of violence found in surveys (Hardesty,

8

Crossman et al., 2015; Johnson, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2011). This conceptualization implies that situational common violence is likely to be gender symmetrical, bidirectional and very common in college student population while cases of intimate terrorism may be underrepresented, and has the potential to guide prevention and intervention efforts targeting them.

1.3 Theoretical frameworks

The literature on dating violence has focused on an exploration of risk and protective factors, and neglected the development of overarching and integrative theoretical frameworks to explain why dating violence occurs (Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2015; Shorey et al., 2008), although this task is essential for providing guidance for prevention efforts and addressing the right issues relevant to young people's lives and relationships. The social-ecological approach has been proposed as a potentially useful perspective to systematically analyze and interpret multiple risk and protective factors pertaining to different systems and levels of ecology (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2012; WHO, 2010), including individual factors, the peer context, the school context, the community context and societal factors which offer different entry points for prevention efforts (Nation et al., 2003; Teten et al., 2009; Tharp, 2012). Although such a comprehensive perspective is the most promising way to prevent dating violence, it is impracticable and unfeasible in the present context, since it requires collaborations among different organizations, agencies and sectors of society, and necessitates a considerable amount of financial and human resources. Within the limits of the present research, three main frameworks will be presented. These frameworks are particularly chosen because of

their shaping impact on the content and aims of existing prevention programs and their conceptualizations of dating violence. Thus, this section excludes many important studies investigating a different array of risk factors such as substance use, alcohol use, attachment insecurity (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015; Follingstad, Bradley, Helff, & Laughlin, 2002; Jennings et al., 2017; Pepler, 2012), and aims to cover the frameworks relevant in the context of the present research rather than presenting a comprehensive overview.

1.3.1 The feminist framework: gender and power

The feminist framework suggests that patriarchal norms which create, support and normalize male dominance and female subordination are the main cause of violence in intimate relationships, which is almost always perpetrated by men who desire to exert power and control over their female partners (Dardis et al., 2015; Dobash & Dobash, 1984; Shorey et al., 2008). The feminist analysis of violence has evolved from the women's movement in 1970s as a response to the experiences of women who had been subjected to domestic violence and sought support from shelters, the police and other agencies (Johnson, 2011). Grounded in the experiences of these women, feminist ideas have attracted attention to men's socially endorsed dominance and entitlement, power and control issues, and the construction of masculinities, brought the social context and structural power inequalities between men and women to the foreground, and argued against decontextualized, individualized, narrow understandings of violence intimate relationships (Dobash & Dobash, 1984, 2004; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). Such a macro-level and social analysis of violence has generated an interest in how social and structural inequalities transform

intimate relationships, which are infused with power struggles, fears of exploitation

and control issues (Reyes, Foshee, Niolon, Reidy, & Hall, 2016). Drawing upon the

findings of gender asymmetry, analyzing Johnson's intimate terrorism pattern, and

intentionally keeping their focus on the perpetrators, the feminist framework in its

early stages has argued for empowerment of women (Enns, 1993) and has evolved to

highlight the formative role of intersecting dimensions of power and privilege in

violence (Bograd, 1999).

Feminist ideas, originating from domestic violence research, have been

applied to the field of dating violence (Dardis et al., 2015; Finkel, 2007; Shorey et

al., 2008), albeit in a narrowly defined fashion, and initiated studies about the

interplay between gender and violence. One line of research has focused on gender

role attitudes and established that supporting attitudes towards traditional,

conventional and patriarchal gender norms and sexist beliefs are risk factors for

perpetration of dating violence in adolescent and college student samples (Dardis et

al., 2015). For example, Reyes and colleagues (2016) demonstrated that belief in

traditional gender ideology prospectively predicted physical dating violence

perpetrated 18 months later, for those male adolescents who held accepting attitudes

towards violence. Similarly, in a recent study with a sample of Turkish and Turkish

Cypriot college men, acceptance of traditional gender ideologies which essentialized

the power imbalance between men and women, and emphasized role divisions and

sex differences, predicted a higher likelihood of behaving in a physically or

psychologically abusive manner towards one's partner, a relationship mediated by

positive beliefs about wife beating (Husnu & Mertan, 2017). Supporting evidence

comes from qualitative studies with abusive men and shows that they are likely to

consider their violent behaviors as harmless, moral and normal, give reference to the

notions of male authority and distance themselves from their abusive acts by emphasizing their role as protectors and guardians of women (Lau & Stevens, 2012; Mullaney, 2007; Totten, 2003; Wood, 2004). These studies showed that patriarchal gender norms and the acceptance and normalization of violence go hand in hand to increase the risk of dating violence perpetration.

In light of patriarchal beliefs, strict gender role norms and sexist attitudes, violence against a female partner turns out to be a viable strategy to perform and prove one's masculinity, exert control and establish dominance, particularly when one's sense of authority is threatened. A qualitative examination of violent men's accounts has shown that abusive men engaged in violence to compensate for feelings of deprivation and powerlessness, to restore their self-image as a powerful, good, grown-up man and to achieve masculinity (Cogan, Porcerelli, & Dromgoole, 2001; Finkel, 2007; Reitz, 1999; Totten, 2003). In a similar vein, masculine gender role strain, defined as a fear of and concern over failing to fulfill masculine ideals of status and reputation, physical power, and rejection of femininity, has been shown to be associated with more hostility and more accepting attitudes towards violence perpetrated against women and gay men, and predicted endorsement of traditional gender roles and past aggression (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015). Türkoğlu (2013) found similar results in a sample of Turkish married and single men and showed that those men who felt that their masculinity and the breadwinner role was threatened were likely to have more favorable attitudes towards violence and perpetrated more physical and psychological abuse towards their partners. Such results redefine violence against women as a form of masculinity construction and performance, and situate violence in the context of gender-based power imbalances.

The predominance of patriarchal gender norms and the overarching discourses around masculinity, violence and power shape socialization experiences of young people, influence what they think and expect in dating relationships, and inform their interpretation of abusive behaviors. Stein, Tran, and Fisher (2009) showed that college women expected to experience more violence in intimate relationships as compared to their actual experiences and argued that this difference between expectations and experiences might play a role in young women's tolerating and accepting victimization by dating partners. Similarly, Noonan and Charles (2009) showed in their focus groups with middle-school students that students perceived dating relationships from a gendered perspective, defining the female role with tolerance, acceptance, support and love, and the male role with economic provision, and normalized the power differential between males and females in dating relationships. In line with this research, young people were considered to be at greater risk of dating violence victimization and perpetration, when they interpreted controlling and abusive behaviors as an expression of love, concern and commitment to the relationship (Close, 2005; Johnson et al., 2005; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). For example, Johnson and colleagues (2005) demonstrated that African American middle and high school students expressed their confusion about how to distinguish abusive behaviors from flirtatious and attention-seeking behaviors. In a supporting vein, McCarry (2007) showed that young people accepted and justified abusive behaviors perpetrated by men and considered male dominance and superiority as normal, although not explicitly supporting its use. These findings indicate that patriarchal discourses around the normalization and justification of masculine power, control and violence inform young people's understanding of dating, flirting and intimacy, increasing the risk of dating violence perpetration and victimization.

Despite its significant contributions to understand violence against women, feminist theory has been criticized on the grounds that it failed to explain the pattern of mutually violent relationships between young people and women's high perpetration rates of dating violence (Shorey et al., 2008), and failed to tackle with the emotional experiences and interactional processes in violent relationships (Giordano, Copp, Longmore, & Manning, 2016). Such critiques, although raising important points for expanding our thinking, create a caricature of feminist analysis (Johnson, 2011), disregard the evolution and multiplicity of feminist perspectives on violence, fail to take note of intersectional feminism which focuses on privilege, power and inequality rather than essentializing violence and equating it with being a man (McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni, & Rice, 2007), and ignore the methodological criticisms against decontextualized behavioral measurements (Dobash et al., 1992). The major contribution of the feminist approach to the dating violence literature has been its problematization of the control motive, its focus on power and privilege, and its integration of the personal and the political.

1.3.2 The skill-based framework: emotion dysregulation and poor conflict resolution

The skill-based framework argues that violence in intimate relationships results from a lack of more constructive emotional and relational skills to manage conflicts, solve problems, regulate negative emotions and communicate openly (Battle & Rosen, 1994; Carlson & Jones, 2010; Johnson, 1995; Pepler, 2012; Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992; Siegel, 2013; Straus, 1979). Originating from the systemic perspectives on domestic violence, this framework focuses on the dyadic dynamics and negative interactional processes which escalate into violent episodes and

suggests that teaching the necessary skills to change these dynamics can stop and prevent violence. Also called the family conflict approach (Dobash & Dobash, 1984), the skills-based framework defines violence as an emotion regulation and conflict resolution strategy both men and women resort to in the absence of more constructive alternatives, shifts the emphasis from societal forces towards intra-psychic and interpersonal dimensions, and informs court-mandated batterer programs which teach anger control skills to abusive husbands as well as many prevention programs which focus on improving emotional and relational skills. Drawing heavily upon the findings of gender symmetry in adolescent and young adult samples and analyzing Johnson's situational violence pattern, the skills-based approach targets both men and women, and draw attention to violent couples instead of violent men.

The skills-based framework has greatly influenced dating violence research on the role of emotions preceding violent episodes and motivational factors underlying violence. In a review of 74 studies, anger, jealousy and the desire to retaliate for emotional hurt emerged as the most commonly assessed and reported motivations for violence for both men and women (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, McCullars, & Misra, 2012). More recent studies also showed that difficulties in communication, expressing anger and retaliation for emotional hurt were the most common motivations for engaging in psychological and physical dating violence (Elmquist et al., 2016; Leisring, 2013). A supporting line of evidence comes from studies which directly measure negative emotional states, showing increased risk of dating violence perpetration when high levels of trait anger, feelings of anger and hostility towards one's partner in the last encounter (Giordano et al., 2016) and variability in negative affect measured over a 7-day period (McNulty & Hellmuth, 2008). Other studies showed the predominance of negative emotions such as fear of

losing the partner, fear of infidelity, distrust, shame in the perpetration of dating violence in adolescent and young adult samples (Austin, Cercone, & Arias, 2005; Fernet, Hebert, & Pradis, 2016). Overall, such findings indicate that physical and psychological violence perpetration conveys negative and disruptive feelings such as jealousy, anger, emotional hurt and that an array of negative and intense emotional experiences like anger, fear and shame are an inseparable aspect of violence.

The focus on the link between the intensity of emotional experiences and motivations, and dating violence perpetration has expanded to integrate an emotion regulation perspective and initiated research on the relationship between various emotion regulation strategies and the risk of dating violence. In a recent study, Bliton and colleagues (2016) found that perpetration of psychological violence was positively correlated with lack of emotional clarity and difficulties in impulse control for both male and female college students, while lack of emotional awareness was associated with physical violence perpetration only in females. Similarly, Finkel and colleagues (2009) demonstrated that higher impulse control was associated with fewer acts of physical violence towards a dating partner both cross-sectionally and prospectively in a sample of adolescents. In a supporting vein, Cornelius, Shorey and Beebe (2010) showed that flooding (i.e. feeling overwhelmed during an argument, inability to engage in problem solving because of emotional effect of the argument) predicted higher physical violence perpetration. These findings suggest that emotion regulation skills can play a protective role against dating violence perpetration.

With regards to specific emotion regulation strategies, there is some evidence suggesting that emotion suppression and cognitive appraisal might prevent violence under certain circumstances. In a sample of college students who were asked to listen to a series of relational conflict scenarios and imagine how they would react, those

who used suppression more frequently as an emotion regulation strategy expressed less intentions of being verbally abusive, while those who suppressed emotions less frequently expressed more intentions of verbal aggression when their emotional arousal in reaction to the scenario was high (Stappenbeck & Fromme, 2014). In another study, Maldonado, DiLillo, and Hoffman (2015) showed that explicit instructions to engage in cognitive reappraisal decreased verbalized intentions of being violent in response to an anger-provoking scenario, while the instruction to suppress emotions had the opposite effect and increased verbalizations of intended violence, among those who were physically violent towards a dating partner at least once in the past 6 months.

Another line of research supporting the skills-based framework focuses on dyadic processes and conflict resolution interactions, and investigates the characteristics of such processes which differentiate violent from non-violent couples. In a recent study, Fernet and colleagues (2016) reported that in those adolescent dating relationships where the male partner or both partners engaged in physical, sexual or psychological violence towards each other, the couple was more likely to get stuck in a conflict pattern characterized by a reciprocal escalation of negative exchanges, and partners were more likely to show negative behaviors during a conflict, including avoidance, expression of negative affect, hostility and argumentativeness as compared to non-violent couples. Similarly, higher perpetration and victimization rates were found to be associated with more frequent use of the conflict resolution strategies of withdrawal (i.e. refusing to discuss an issue) and conflict engagement (i.e losing control during an argument, blaming the partner) in a sample of adolescents (Bonache, Ramirez-Santana, & Gonzalez-

Mendez, 2016). Such findings suggest that violent couples need support in discussing relational issues openly and finding constructive ways to resolve conflicts.

Communication styles of violent couples also differentiate them from non-violent couples. In one study, Messinger, Rickert, Fry, Lessel, and Davidson (2012) found that the use of escalating strategies (i.e. controlling, monitoring, blaming) and temporary avoidance predicted increased physical dating violence perpetration and victimization in a sample of female adolescents and young adults, while verbal reasoning predicted lower victimization for young adults and lower perpetration for adolescents. Similarly, Goussinsky, Michael, and Yassour-Borochowitz (2017) found that when one's partner is controlling and the relationship is characterized by an imbalance of power, disrespectful communication and avoidance predicted physical dating violence perpetration and victimization, respectively. In another study, Cornelius and colleagues (2010) showed that an interactive pattern of criticism, defensiveness, contempt and withdrawal predicted psychological violence perpetration, and psychological and physical violence victimization. Surprisingly, the findings of this study showed that the attempts to repair ruptures (i.e. using humor, playing down negative verbalizations) predicted both physical and psychological victimization, suggesting that when one partner tries to soothe the "aggressive" partner through repair attempts, the problems such as violence might be ignored and that having a positive communication style might be construed as the ideal despite its costs.

Feminist critiques of the skills-based approach point out that an increased emphasis on the dyadic processes obscures power differences between partners, decreases men's accountability for violence, and runs the risk of defining violence solely as a behavior isolated from relational and social dynamics, and individualizing

it. While feminist critiques reflect the concerns over the use of "scientific evidence" to recreate and normalize violence against women or making it invisible by emphasizing "shared" responsibility, the skills-based framework draws our attention to proximal factors associated with violence, helps us to understand internal and dyadic processes involved and open up new avenues for intervention and prevention.

1.3.3 The cycle of violence framework

The cycle of violence framework puts forward the idea that dating violence results from childhood experiences of violence, and calls our attention to socialization processes in one's family of origin and how they transform later relationships. Drawing upon the intergenerational transmission of violence hypothesis and social learning theory, this framework has generated a line of studies examining the link between child maltreatment and dating violence in adolescence and young adulthood, and has established the fact that witnessing domestic violence or experiencing abuse while growing up might increase the risk of dating violence in later years (Shorey et al., 2008). However, because not all child victims of parental violence turn into abusers themselves in adult life, most researchers have started to investigate the processes through which childhood experiences exert their impact on later relationships and the conditions under which such impact is manifested (Dardis et al., 2015). Learning to be aggressive through modelling and observing violent parents, developing accepting attitudes towards violence and normalizing it, forming a self-concept characterized by feelings of low self-esteem and worthlessness, reducing one's sensitivity to signs of threat and habitual use of dissociation, failing to regulate intense emotional experiences due to alterations in neurobiological mechanisms

caused by chronic HPA activation are among the processes explored in relation to this framework (Cascardi, 2016; Messinger et al., 2012; Shorey et al., 2008; Siegel, 2013; Wolfe et al., 2004; Totten, 2003).

Accumulating evidence shows that witnessing domestic violence, being physically, sexually or psychologically abused, or being neglected as a child is associated with increased risk of violence perpetration and victimization in dating relationships in adolescent or college student samples. For example, in a recent study, Paat and Markham (2016) demonstrated that experiencing neglect and witnessing domestic violence in childhood were positively associated with physical dating violence perpetration and victimization in a sample of college students. Similarly, being abused before 18 years of age predicted physical violence perpetration and victimization in a dating relationships both for males and females (Richards, Tillyer, & Wright, 2017). In another study, Kaukinen, Buchanan and Gover (2015) found that experience of abuse as a child increased the risk of being in a mutually violent relationship at college.

Researchers have focused on exploring the variables which mediate the relationship between experiences of violence in childhood and adolescence, and highlighted the role of psychological well-being and emotional symptoms in carrying the effects of childhood maltreatment to later relationships. In one study, Wolfe and colleagues (2014) found that for both male and female adolescents, trauma-related symptoms such as anger, anxiety, dissociation and stress mediated the relationship between child maltreatment and perpetration of physical violence in a sample of adolescents. In another study, Cascardi (2016) showed that maltreatment by parents in mid-adolescence predicted physical dating violence victimization in a sample of female adolescents and this relationship was mediated by psychological distress

20

symptoms. Although this is not a comprehensive overview of studies exploring potential mediating variables, the findings reported indicate the promise of trauma-related interventions or stress-management skills training in alleviating the effects of maltreatment and abuse, and reducing the risk of dating violence (Cascardi, 2016; Wolfe et al., 2014).

Although explaining the link between child abuse and later dating violence and exploring the situational factors and conditions which uncover this link remain to be solved as an empirical problem, the cycle of violence framework brings to the fore the impact of socialization processes in the family, provides an account which might cover both perpetration and victimization experiences, and guides prevention efforts, targeting those young people with histories of maltreatment, abuse or domestic violence, and expanding their perspective to address underlying maladaptive emotional and psychological processes initiated by early adversity.

1.4 Dating violence prevention

Since the 1990s, the issue of dating violence and its prevention have started to receive increasing attention. This upsurge of interest in preventing violence in intimate relationships has emerged from the realization that the court-mandated batterer programs which target only male perpetrators have proven to be ineffective, demonstrating high rates of recidivism (Hamby, 2006; Heru, 2007; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009), that interventions for domestic and intimate partner violence are likely to be more costly than preventive work (Hamby, 2006; O'Leary & Slep, 2012), and that dating violence is very common and associated with serious health risks among young people. Today, the field of dating violence prevention is

dominated by a public-health perspective which draws heavily upon systemic, developmental and psychological theories and increasingly moves away from feminist thinking, reflecting tensions in conceptualization and measurement of dating violence reviewed in the previous section. Nevertheless, there are some empirically-tested, evidence-based dating violence prevention programs predominantly in the US and Europe, targeting middle and high school students, and being designed to be integrated into the school curriculum or implemented at a school setting. Such programs provide promising results for preventing dating violence and supporting the development of more egalitarian relationships, although there are still many theoretical, methodological and practical challenges that need to be addressed. This section presents an overview and evaluation of the available approaches to dating violence prevention, summarizes the criticisms raised with regards to the current status of the field, and provides a review the effectiveness research.

In the last couple of decades, the efforts of non-governmental organizations working in the fields of human rights and violence against women as well as some researchers, academics and policy makers have been the main driving force behind setting the agenda of dating violence prevention. In the United Sates, the Division of Violence Prevention at the Center for Disease Prevention and Control aims to reframe dating violence as a preventable problem, mobilize primary prevention efforts and investigate effectiveness of these efforts (Hammond, Whitaker, Lutzker, Mercy, & Chin, 2006). In 2012, February was recognized as the National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month which is dedicated to awareness-raising campaigns and activities (Mulford & Blachman-Demner, 2013). In the international arena, non-governmental organizations have formed collaborations to promote anti-violence programs and campaigns targeting youth (WHO, 2010).

Violence Prevention Alliance, a network established in 2004 and composed of a wide range of international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations, has addressed the problem of intimate partner violence in their action plan for 2012-2020 and recommended the implementation of programs which challenge violence-supportive norms, improve interpersonal skills and increase access to available services for primarily high-risk populations (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2012). In 2014, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, also called the Istanbul Convention, was entered into force and ratified by some European countries, including Turkey, and allocated Articles 13-17 to describe the obligations of the signing parties to engage in preventive work. In Turkey, a few feminist and human rights activists as well as organizations try to incorporate a prevention framework into their practice, although there has been no published work which addresses the effectiveness of such efforts for adolescents and young adults in dating relationships.

Prevention science uses three main strategies, namely primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, which differ in the nature and timing of services provided and the characteristics of the target population (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; WHO, 2010). In the field of dating violence, primary prevention efforts aim to prevent abuse before it occurs and reaches out to a large number of individuals through universal programs implemented at schools. Secondary and tertiary prevention addresses the needs of those young people who have already engaged in violence in a dating relationship, with the former aiming to reduce the impact of violence in the short-run and to prevent the continuation of abusive behaviors, and the latter focusing on long-term rehabilitation and treatment (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; O'Leary, Woodin, & Fritz, 2006; Theriot, 2008; WHO, 2010). Another classification of prevention and

intervention strategies is based solely on the characteristics of the target population, with universal prevention targeting all individuals, selective intervention targeting populations with a high risk of engagement in dating violence and, indicated intervention targeting those who have already engaged in dating violence (Whitaker et al., 2006). WHO (2010) points out that secondary and tertiary prevention receive more financial and human resources, and recommend practitioners who work to eliminate intimate partner violence to put more emphasis on primary and universal prevention and establish a sound evidence base for their effectiveness.

Within such an atmosphere, the public health framework has gained popularity with its focus on universal programs mainly in the United States, Canada and Europe, targeting school-age youth, focusing on risk reduction, incorporating the elements of the skills-based framework and conceptualizing dating violence as bidirectional, symmetrical and mutual (Capaldi & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2012; Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Capaldi, 2012; Dutton, 2012; Pepler, 2012). This approach has been successful in designing primary prevention programs which challenge traditional beliefs about gender as well as accepting attitudes towards violence and promote relationship skills, and secondary prevention programs which focus on high risk groups such as those with a history of maltreatment, and prior experience of dating violence. One theoretical challenge such programs have encountered in their early stages was their weak theoretical basis (Whitaker et al., 2006) and their inadequate incorporation of the evidence on risk and protective factors for dating violence into program design (Hamby, 2006). In later stages, a polarization has emerged between the feminist framework which emphasizes patriarchal norms, traditional gender ideologies, power imbalances and focuses solely on men as perpetrators, and the skills-based framework which brings to the

fore the emotional, psychological and dyadic aspects of violent relationships and focuses on both men and women as potential perpetrators and victims who lack the necessary skills for anger control, self-regulation, conflict resolution and problem solving. Such polarization has led some researchers to call for a paradigm shift away from feminist thinking towards more developmental approaches and dyadic interventions at the expense of an understanding of gender and power (Capaldi & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2012; Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Capaldi, 2012). This either/or way of thinking has recently turned into an obstacle to any fruitful exchange of ideas and continues to pose a risk to developing a more expanded, inclusive and integrative approach to dating violence.

A review of the available dating violence prevention programs shows that they mostly target middle and high school students since adolescence has been pointed out as the most suitable developmental period for such learning (Hamby, 2006; O'Leary & Slep, 2012), while programs targeting college samples tend to focus solely on sexual violence (O'Leary et al., 2006). A summary of the programs is presented in the table in Appendix A. As can be seen from the table, a majority of the programs are universal and integrated into class curriculum at schools, while a minority has a small-group format to target those who are under increased risk of dating violence perpetration and victimization or those who have already experienced violence in dating relationships. Nearly all programs present opportunities to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, change attitudes towards dating violence, increase awareness and knowledge about power and control dynamics, improve constructive conflict resolution and interpersonal skills and learn about available community services for perpetrators or victims of intimate partner violence (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; Meyer & Stein, 2004; O'Leary et al., 2006;

Pittman et al., 2000; Theriot, 2008). They show great variability in terms of dosage, design and follow-up periods. The number of sessions ranges from 1 to 24, conducted on a weekly basis or daily and consecutively. Most programs incorporate a control group which receives no intervention or continues with ordinary class curriculum. Nearly one half of the programs have longitudinal designs and follow-ups extending from 1 month to 4 years.

With regards to the approaches and methods utilized, most programs integrate didactic and educative components with role-plays and experiential activities which facilitate learning new skills. Several practitioners and researchers have argued that for successful results, the program should be intense and informative enough to allow for participants' sufficient exposure to the material (Nation et al., 2003) and it should also be long enough to ensure that participants have time to practice newly learned skills and the opportunity to get actively involved in the process (Meyer & Stein, 2004; Nation et al., 2003; O'Leary et al., 2006). Studies of school-based preventive programs targeting youth problems such as conduct disorder, drug abuse, smoking, school attendance have shown that a focus on improving social skills, offering guidance, providing room for active involvement and preparing the ground for practice produce the greatest changes in the desired direction, whereas a solely didactic approach and fear induction by highlighting negative consequences of risky behaviors tend to backfire (O'Leary et al., 2006). In light of this evidence, dating violence researchers argue for incorporating more active and practice-based components like interactive discussions and role-plays into future programs (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; Shorey et al., 2012). However, the need for a systematic exploration of program elements and activities which play a

transformative role in obtaining desired changes is still being discussed in the field (O'Leary et al., 2006; Wekerle & Tanaka, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2006).

Methodologically, the field of dating violence prevention has been dominated by objectivist, quantitative approaches. Current prevention efforts have been criticized because of relatively short follow-up periods, low or unreported retention rates, lack of attention to fidelity in program implementation, lack of attention to the impact of social desirability, lack of behavioral outcome measures, ceiling effects on behavioral and attitudinal measures, overreliance on self-report measures, and lack of control groups or the predominance of no-intervention control groups (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; Hamby, 2006; O'Leary et al., 2006; Wekerle & Tanaka, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2006). Several researchers have suggested that multiple methods such as observations, interviews and multiple informants such as peer or partner ratings should be used to ensure a valid assessment of dating violence perpetration and victimization (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; Murray & Graybeal, 2007; O'Leary et al., 2006; Pittman et al., 2000; Wekerle & Tanaka, 2010). Despite their methodological limitations, accumulating quantitative evidence on dating violence prevention efforts and their effectiveness has provided a valuable knowledge base for future studies. However, the dominance of the quantitative and objectivist tradition with an exclusive focus on experimental studies on the effects of universal prevention programs targeting a wide audience has curtailed qualitative studies which involve a more in-depth exploration of a smaller number of cases and may shed light on processes of change as well as lack of change after prevention programs.

1.5 Dating violence prevention effectiveness

The effectiveness of dating violence prevention programs have been mostly
evaluated quantitatively with pre-post designs investigating change in behavioral,
attitudinal and informational outcome measures. The few qualitative studies
published has employed a focus-group design and explored how young people
understand, make meaning out of the prevention programs and reflect on their
impact. This section presents a summary of the quantitative and qualitative findings
with respect to the effectiveness of available dating violence prevention programs.

1.5.1 Quantitative studies

1.5.1.1 Dating violence perpetration

Few studies have examined the influence of prevention programs on the perpetration
of dating violence and demonstrated a decrease in self-reported rate of abusive acts
in dating relationships, particularly and consistently for Safe Dates. Among high-
school students, Safe Dates has been shown to be effective in reducing perpetration
of physically violent acts against a current dating partner at 1 month follow-up
(Foshee et al., 1998) and in decreasing the frequency of serious acts of physical
violence such as burning, attacking with an object, punching at 4 year follow-up
(Foshee et al., 2004) and moderate acts of physical violence such as slapping, biting,
grabbing, kicking at 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow ups (Foshee et al., 2005). Foshee and
colleagues (2005) found that a similar reduction in the reported frequency of severe
physical violence was obtained and sustained over a 4 year period, only for those
who had not been abusive towards their partners or had not used severe physical
violence prior to the intervention. According to the results of their study, those who

28

had been involved in severe physical violence in their dating relationships before showed no change after the program. In a similar vein, Wolfe and colleagues (2003) found that participation in the Youth Relationships Project was associated with a steep decline in physical violence perpetration in dating relations over 4 years among a sample of maltreated adolescents in their families. Wolfe and colleagues (2009) also demonstrated that physical dating violence perpetration was lower in Fourth R intervention high schools as compared to control high schools at 30 month follow-up.

Similar to physical dating violence perpetration, Foshee and colleagues showed that Safe Dates reduced the reported rates of sexual violence perpetration among high-school students at 1 month (Foshee et al., 1998), 1, 2, 3 year (Foshee et al., 2005) and 4 year (Foshee et al., 2004, 2005) follow-ups. On the contrary, Taylor, Stein, Mumford and Woods (2013) found that participation in Shifting Boundaries did not lead to a reduction in the rate and frequency of sexual violence perpetration against a dating partner among middle-school students at 6 month follow-up.

With regards to psychological violence perpetration, Foshee and colleagues demonstrated that intervention participants in Safe Dates reported a decline in their psychologically abusive behaviors at 1 month (Foshee et al., 1998) and 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow-ups (Foshee et al., 2005). In another study, Foshee and colleagues (2004) found that such reduction in psychological abuse perpetration was evident only for those who had a high rate of psychological abuse perpetration prior to the program. No other studies have examined behavioral changes in psychological abuse perpetration.

A couple of studies investigated the impact of prevention programs on overall violence perpetration and mostly showed a significant reduction in self-reported rate

of abusive behaviors. Ball and colleagues (2012) found participation in Expect Respect support groups to be effective in reducing violence (physical, psychological) perpetration over 3 months only for those middle school students who had high previous experience with violence in peer and dating relationships. In a similar vein, Ball and colleagues (2013) showed a significant reduction in their reported rate of abuse (physical, sexual, psychological) perpetration towards a dating partner in the past 3 months among those who participated in the Coaching Boys into Men program. The only study which did not report a significant change in overall violence perpetration among a sample of high school students at post-test and 6 month follow-up was Jaycox and colleauges' (2006) evaluation of Ending Violence, a program which was significantly shorter than others and specifically focused on legal issues concerning dating violence.

Overall, Safe Dates seem to be effective in reducing perpetration of violence in dating relationships and to exert long-term effects. Other programs provide supporting evidence, although most studies focus on physical violence perpetration rather than sexual and psychological violence. The programs seem to be more effective if young people have prior involvement with dating or domestic violence, while proving to be unhelpful in cases of severe violence perpetration.

1.5.1.2 Dating violence victimization

The few studies which investigated the effect of programs on self-reported rates of victimization by dating partners have shown inconsistent results. Wolfe and colleagues (2003) found that physical abuse victimization and experience of threats by a dating partner in the intervention group decreased to a greater extent than

control group over a period of 2.5 years. For Safe Dates, although there was no evidence of a decrease in physical abuse victimization in the total sample (Foshee et al.,1998, 2000), there was a significant change in the desired direction among those who had experienced physical violence at a high or average rate at 4 year follow-up (Foshee et al., 2004). In another study, Foshee and colleagues (2005) found that moderate, yet not severe, violence victimization decreased in intervention participants as compared to control participants at 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow-up.

Regarding sexual victimization, Foshee and colleagues (1998; 2000, 2005) found no significant difference in the reported rates of sexual victimization between Safe Dates participants and controls at 1 month, 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow ups. The only study which reported a significant decrease in sexual abuse victimization in the intervention group at 4-year follow-up was conducted by Foshee and colleagues (2004).

The rates of psychological abuse victimization did not decrease in Safe Dates participants over 1 month (Foshee et al., 1998), 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow ups (Foshee et al., 2000; Foshee et al., 2004, 2005). On the other hand, participants in the Youth Relationships Project, a significantly longer program than Safe Dates, showed steeper declines in their rate of emotional abuse victimization than controls over a 3 year period (Wolfe et al., 2003).

Overall, the evidence on the programs' effect on victimization is weak, an expected finding since the partner being abused is not responsible for the abuse and since behavioral measures of victimization (i.e. your partner slapped you/pulled your hair/called you names) are collected, rather than ways of coping with and reacting to the partner's behaviors (i.e. complied/ignored/cried/broke up in reaction to abuse).

1.5.1.3 Communication and conflict resolution skills

Some dating violence prevention programs have investigated whether participation in prevention programs led to any improvement in communication, conflict resolution or anger control skills and demonstrated inconsistent results. Foshee and colleagues (1998, 2000) documented that Safe Dates participants reported better communication skills and less violent responses to anger than controls at 1 month and 1 year follow-ups. In a similar vein, Schwartz, Magee, Griffin, and Dupuis (2004) demonstrated that intervention participants reported an improvement in their ability to control their anger, that they were more aware of their emotions when they were angry and that their anger escalated less as compared to controls at post-test. Their results also indicated a decrease in negative evaluations of the partner who provoked an angry reaction and an increase in the belief that one was entitled to respect for one's integrity. Ball and colleagues (2012) also showed that Expect Respect participants did report using less aggressive conflict resolution techniques such as verbally expressing emotions and opinions, waiting until one cools down, coming up with a solution at post-test.

On the contrary, in another paper, Foshee and colleagues (2005) reported that intervention participants did not differ from control participants in their conflict resolution skills at 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow-ups. Wolfe and colleagues (2003) also demonstrated that participants' interpersonal competence, which was a composite of emotional expressiveness, self-assertion, provision of emotional support, conflict resolution did not show any significant improvement as compared to controls over a 2.5 year period.

Overall, available evidence shows some improvement in emotion regulation and conflict resolution skills, although raising questions about whether the gains can be sustained in the long run.

1.5.1.4 Attitudes towards dating violence

Most dating violence prevention programs have addressed attitudes towards dating violence and aimed to challenge non-egalitarian, violence-tolerant dating norms. A majority of studies consistently show that dating violence prevention programs are successful in decreasing acceptance of violence and abuse in dating relationships and in modifying beliefs about the usefulness of violence. In a series of studies with Safe Dates participants, Foshee and colleagues (1998, 2000, 2005) found that the intervention group had more negative attitudes towards dating violence, perceived dating violence as having more negative and fewer positive consequences than controls at 1 month, 1, 2, 3 and 4 year follow -ups. Foshee and colleagues (1998, 2005) also found that the positive impact of the treatment on physical, sexual and psychological abuse perpetration was mediated by changes in attitudes towards dating violence. Similar reductions in the level of acceptance and justification of dating violence in male and female participants have been reported by other researchers immediately after the program (Antle, Sullivan, Dryden, Karam, & Barbee, 2011; Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997; Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, & Gilmore, 1996; Kuffel & Katz, 2002; Mcgowan, 1997), at 1 month (Lavoie, Vezina, Piche, & Boivin, 1995) and 6 month follow-up (Weisz & Black, 2001). In addition, a meta-analysis of dating violence prevention programs targeting

middle and high-school students demonstrated that the programs were effective in changing attitudes towards dating violence (Ting, 2009).

Despite the accumulation of evidence for significant improvements in violence-tolerant attitudes as a result of participation in prevention programs, other studies showed that attitude change was not sustained over time (Krajewski et al., 1996; Kuffel & Katz, 2002) and was valid only for the acceptance of female-to-male violence, yet not male-to-female violence (Jaycox et al., 2006). Another striking finding was that a few studies reported significant changes in the undesired direction, implying an increase in positive attitudes towards dating violence, especially among males (Jaffe et al., 1992; Meyer & Stein, 2004). This backlash has been explained by males getting defensive as a result of being exposed to ideas which challenge their privileged position (Jaffe et al., 1992) and showed the need for more research on this topic (Hamby, 2006).

In sum, although the programs seem to be effective in decreasing the acceptance of dating violence, this attitude change might be specific to a situation (i.e. male-to-female) or a group (i.e. females), and requires further exploration.

1.5.1.5 Attitudes towards gender roles

Some violence prevention programs have targeted traditional gender-role norms and stereotypes, which are shown to be highly correlated with use of violence with intimate partners. Studies consistently show that dating violence prevention programs are effective in decreasing the acceptance of traditional attitudes towards gender roles (Foshee et al., 1998, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2004; Schwartz, Griffin, Russel, & Frontaura-Duck, 2006) and that this change can be sustained for up to 4

years (Foshee et al., 2005). Foshee and colleagues (1998, 2005) also demonstrated that reduced acceptance of prescribed gender role norms mediated the effect of program on psychological and sexual abuse perpetration. There is only one study which showed no significant improvement in attitudes towards sexist attitudes and traditional gender roles at posttest and a 1-year follow-up among participants of Coaching Boys into Men (Miller et al., 2012; Miller et al., 2013), a program which is implemented in all-male athlete groups. These findings suggest that sexist attitudes are likely to change following prevention programs and mixed-sex groups might be one factor which facilitate this process.

1.5.1.6 Knowledge about dating violence

A majority of dating violence prevention programs has aimed to increase participants' factual knowledge about dating violence, to improve the ability to recognize abuse and to differentiate abusive from non-abusive behaviors. Most research shows that participation in programs increased what students know about dating violence at posttest (McGowan, 1997), 1 month (Lavoie et al., 1995), 2 month (Banyard et al., 2007), 5 month (Krajewski et al., 1996), and 6 month (Weisz & Black, 2001) follow-ups. Kuffel and Katz (2002) reported that intervention participants were better at recognizing psychologically, physically and sexually abusive behaviors than controls at 1.5 month follow-up, while there is some evidence suggesting that such improvements do not last a year (Miller et al., 2013). Evidence for improved knowledge about dating violence has also been demonstrated in a meta-analysis covering 13 dating violence prevention programs for middle and high school

students (Ting, 2009). Overall, the programs seem to play an informative role, although how long such information is sustained is questioned.

1.5.1.7 Help-seeking

A few dating violence prevention programs offer information about available services for helping victims and perpetrators of abuse and mobilize participants to seek help when they need it. Research shows that Safe Dates is effective in increasing the participants' belief in the necessity of help for perpetrators or victims of dating violence (Foshee et al., 1998; 2000). In a similar vein, Jaycox and colleagues (2016) reported that among Ending Violence participants, there was a significant increase in the odds of searching for help, particularly from lawyers and police, in case of a violent incident with a dating partner. These findings show that the programs can support help-seeking intentions and behaviors, one of the most important coping strategies for violence.

1.5.2 Qualitative studies

A review of the dating violence prevention literature revealed only three studies which employed a qualitative data collection method to understand how participants were influenced by being a participant in a dating violence prevention program (Ball et al., 2009; Elias-Lambert, Black, & Sharma, 2010; Rosen & Bezold, 1996). A common theme reported by participants across three studies pertained to the experience of being in a group where they felt secure, accepted and understood. Expect Respect participants emphasized group members' encouragement, support and respect for them, and expressed trust and a sense of belongingness (Ball et al.,

2009). Another common theme was related to having an opportunity in the program to think about their experiences in dating relationships and becoming aware of their own behaviors as well their partners' behaviors. Expect Respect participants reported having a clearer understanding and awareness of abusive acts they perpetrated and experienced (Ball et al., 2009), while Rosen and Bezold's participants (1996) emphasized the calm atmosphere in which they could distance themselves from strong emotions and explore their meaning in the group. Educational videos were good and non-intimidating starting points to initiate a discussion about abuse and power (Ball et al., 2009) and were received favorably by most participants (Elias-Lambert et al., 2010). One last common theme was about feelings of self-confidence and a sense of entitlement about having personal boundaries developing as a result of group experience (Ball et al., 2009; Rosen & Bezold, 1996). Participants, particularly females, in the Expect Respect program reported that they learned how to protect their boundaries, they had the right to be treated with respect and they knew what steps to take if their boundaries were violated, while males were more likely to indicate that they learned how to express themselves and communicate better with their partners. This increased sense of self-confidence and efficacy to protect their limits and to have rights was also reported by high school and college students participating in Rosen and Bezold's study (1996).

Overall, despite some methodological and conceptual limitations, there is evidence to suggest that existing dating violence prevention programs are somewhat effective in reducing dating violence perpetration, enhancing conflict resolution skills, improving attitudes towards dating violence and non-egalitarian gender roles, and increasing knowledge about dating violence and resources for help. Evidence is weaker for intervention effects on dating violence victimization rates. Qualitative

studies also show that group experience creates a facilitating, supportive, safe environment for participants to explore and understand their own and their partner's behaviors, to gain strength for standing up for oneself and to understand personal rights and boundaries. These results indicate that dating violence prevention programs are worthwhile and promising.

1.6 Feminist clinical practice as a framework for dating violence prevention

The dominance of the public health framework in the field of dating violence prevention and the polarization between explanatory approaches have limited the development of integrative theoretical perspectives and hindered any fruitful exchange. An expanded and inclusive framework is needed to counteract this polarization, strengthen the theoretical basis of future programs, address the multiplicity and heterogeneity of experiences of dating violence and capture the diversity in college student samples. Feminist clinical work, which originated from the women's liberation movement in the 1960s as a critique of the isolating, individualizing, oppressive psychological formulations which neglect social and structural inequalities (Enns, 1992a; Evans, Kincade, Marbley, & Seem, 2005; Lyness & Lyness, 2007), can offer a valuable guiding framework for dating violence prevention efforts. This section presents a brief summary of feminist clinical practices which informed the present research and argues that they can provide important insights and a sense of direction to dating violence prevention programming by offering a deep exploration of the vicissitudes of violent relationships, a thorough analysis of power dynamics and an expanded focus on issues of social justice and diversity.

Firstly, the practices and approaches of feminist clinicians working with victims and perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner violence can provide a guiding framework for dating violence prevention efforts. Although the feminist approach has been solely reduced to and equated with the Duluth model interventions for male batterer groups (Gondolf, 2007), there are multiple feminist voices and practices which search for alternative treatment options, particularly for those couples who stay together despite domestic violence. Such alternatives include conjoint couple therapy which holds the perpetrator responsible for his violence, reframes violence as a choice, gives priority to violence over any other relational issue, and openly resists and problematizes normalization and justification discourses. At the same time, such therapies aim to create a space to explore interactional patterns and relationship dynamics, and explore subjective experiences of both partners. (Goldner, 1998, 1999, 2004; Vatcher & Bogo, 2001). Another alternative is group work and community-based practices which provide education and initiate discussions about the topics of power and control, and support community involvement (Almeida & Durkin, 1999; Parker, 2008, 2009).

Despite the issues and criticisms raised in relation to these alternatives (Bograd & Mederos, 1999; Maharaj, 2017), there is a call for a multiplicity of perspectives from feminist clinicians (George & Stith, 2014; Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg, & Walker, 1990; Goldner, 1999, 2004) and an expanded view of violence as a psychological, relational, social, moral and political issue (Goldner, 1999). This approach sustains a feminist analysis of gender and power and simultaneously capture the emotionally conflictual nature of abusive relationships (Goldner, 1999). These perspectives can provide a good model for prevention, putting forward the principles of emphasizing responsibility for one's violent actions and safety, and

simultaneously maintaining an open and reflective stance for exploring emotional

and dyadic aspects of relationships.

Secondly, feminist clinical practice can inform dating violence prevention by

offering a detailed analysis of power and equality in intimacy and analyzing

processes and skills involved in establishing egalitarian couple relationships. A

unique aspect of feminist clinical work is its unceasing interest in power imbalances

and how they transform the domain of family and couple relationships (Almeida &

Durkin, 1999; Enns, 1992a; Haddock, Zimmerman, & MacPhee, 2000; Knudson-

Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Knudson-Martin, 2013; Lyness & Lyness, 2007).

Although such work is almost always focused on marital relations, feminist

clinicians present a thorough and deep understanding of relational power dynamics,

which can be applied to dating and intimate partnerships. In their analysis, those

relationships characterized by a power imbalance are considered to empower one

partner, usually the male, at the expense of the other, give priority to his needs and

desires, force one partner to accommodate to the other and lead to domination and

control over one partner. However, an equal relationship is one in which both

partners feel supported and valued, enjoy feelings of safety and intimacy, mutually

attend and accommodate to each other's needs and expectations, influence

relationship and life decisions, share the responsibility to sustain the relationship and

to solve problems, and find a balance between interdependence and autonomy

(Haddock et al., 2000; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Knudson-Martin, 2013;

Rabin, 1994). Such concepts can be incorporated into psycho-educational and

preventive work as topics of discussion and brainstorming (Haddock et al., 2000;

Perez & Rasmussen, 1997; Rabin, 1994), and can be particularly relevant in the

context of dating violence prevention work with young people, since the issue of

power imbalance is a core dimension of violent relationships and transforming the relational domain towards equality requires deliberate and conscious effort in the face of prevailing traditional, patriarchal ideologies (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996).

Feminist counselors and clinicians have explored the nature of this effort and elaborated on the individual and interpersonal skills necessary to establish a balance of power and equality in intimate relationships. In their view, the capacity for mutuality, trust, negotiation, emotional awareness and self-monitoring are the building blocks of equal relationships (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2005; Rabin, 1994). For example, Fishbane (2011) asserted that the ability to regulate emotions, accept boundaries, negotiate conflict, share responsibility, empathize with the partner and repair ruptures were the antidote to power struggles and inequality. Goldner (1999) emphasizes the significance of establishing mutuality and containing one's own emotional states in equal relationships. Similarly, Skerret (1996) pointed out that mutuality which included an understanding of the impact of one's behaviors on the partner, an interest in the partner's feelings and ideas, a willingness to invest one's time and energy to maintain the relationship, an effort to increase authenticity and contain differences was the cornerstone of feminist counseling with couples. Along similar lines, Knudson-Martin (2013) posited that in order to create an egalitarian relationship, couples needed to create "a circle of care" where responsibility, vulnerability, attunement and influence were all mutual.

Those analyses about how equal relationships are formed and which skills are employed in the process of establishing a balance of power offer an invaluable guiding framework for informing dating violence prevention programs as well as strengthening their theoretical basis. This framework parallels the CDC (2008)

report, a widely cited resource by the proponents of the skills-based approach,

highlighting the significance of the following for promoting non-violent

relationships: believing in the notion that conflicts can be resolved non-violently,

developing the skills for effective communication and stress management, respecting

the partner's autonomy, sharing the decision making power and establishing trust.

Thus, feminist counseling and clinical work has the potential to offer an overarching

approach which involves a skills-based component while keeping the issues of power

and equality on the table, and providing an integrative framework in contrast to the

polarization prevailing in the field of dating violence prevention.

Developing a critical lens towards social and structural inequalities, reflecting

on and becoming aware of how they influence one's personal and relational life is

another defining element of feminist clinical practice, which might inform dating

violence prevention efforts. Contextualizing problems and situating them within

broader systems of oppression and privilege, such as sexism, patriarchy and rigid

gender socialization patterns (Aronson & Buchholz, 2001; Enns, 1992a) calls for a

shift in perspective as well as awareness raising and educative interventions. To

probe such a perspective, feminist counselors and clinicians inquire into the

processes of decision making and role division in the marriage, educate couples and

individuals about how gendered expectations might limit their growth and healthy

functioning, make the operation of power visible, so that new and more egalitarian

values and practices can be explored and practiced (Enns, 1992a; Knudson-Martin &

Mahoney, 1996; 2005). In the absence of constant self-monitoring and deliberate

attempts to disrupt the status quo and openly negotiate the issues of power and status,

equality turns into a myth, that is a set of beliefs endorsed verbally, yet not practiced

in the organization of daily life (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998). These

observations and ideas introduce a discourse of continuous effort and shared

negotiation in intimate relationships, since equality is more like "a process rather

than an ideological viewpoint" (p. 245, Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2005), a

dynamic practice rather than an outcome to be achieved and an endpoint to be

arrived at. Although such analyses are based on marriage, they can be applied to

dating relationships and inform preventive programs by offering a contextualized and

realistic understanding of equality.

Thirdly, recent changes in feminist thinking and their application to clinical

practice can provide conceptual tools to address the criticisms raised against existing

dating violence prevention programs for their lack of attention to diversity with

regards to sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, culture and against the feminist

framework for its neglect of female-perpetrated and same-sex violence (Kerig, Volz,

Moeddel, & Cuellar, 2010; McPhail et al., 2007; Shorey, Strauss, Haynes, Cornelius,

& Stuart, 2016). This call for a more expanded and inclusive perspective is parallel

to the recent developments in feminist counseling and clinical practice which suggest

more contextualized, multiculturally competent treatment and formulation models

(Gentlewarrior, Martin-Jearld, Skok, & Sweetser, 2008) and converge with other

approaches which set a social justice agenda (Moane, 2010). Coupled with the

introduction of the concept of intersectionality which focuses on how multiple social

identities intersect to create forms of oppression and privilege (Cole, 2009;

Rosenthal, 2016), these currents move feminist clinical work towards a more focal

analysis of the operation of power and a recognition and exploration of diversity in

experiences of oppression (Crethar, Torres Rivera, & Nash, 2008; Gentlewarrior et

al., 2008). These changes, which advocate for the values of diversity, social justice

and contextual thinking, have the potential to expand and advance the dating

violence prevention programming by positioning it within a deliberately political, social justice oriented movement, incorporating an inclusive framework, resisting homogenizing views of sex and dating violence, and inviting diversity and multiplicity in experiences and perspectives.

Lastly, feminist clinical approaches are particularly relevant in the present context, since patriarchal and traditional discourses are dominant influences on the organization of heterosexual relationships and the social construction of male-female roles in Turkey (Kandiyoti, 1995; Sunar & Fisek, 2005). Power inequality, spatial and occupational sex-segregation, and the notions of difference and complementarity between men and women are defining features of traditional families (Delaney, 1991; Fisek, 2002; Olson, 1982), while same-sex partnerships are completely ignored. Although there is much variance with respect to social status, ethnicity, urban-rural background, such discourses shape the socialization processes of most young people. The university context introduces new discourses and values such as diversity, egalitarianism, and gender equality, creating potential for conflict with prior socialization and offering opportunities to renegotiate one's relationship to patriarchal discourses. Feminist clinical approaches, originating from the women's fight against patriarchy, offer a rich array of conceptual and practical tools to capture this conflict and to support transformation towards equality and safety. Thus, feminist approaches provide a framework which is suitable to the characteristics of a college student sample in the Turkish context and help to contextualize the present effort.

1.7 The present research: a mixed-methods evaluation of a dating violence
prevention program

Increasing attention to the issue of dating violence prevention in the international
arena has had limited impact on Turkey, except mobilizing feminist activists as well
as a few human rights and youth organizations in the non-governmental sector,
despite the fact that Turkey ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2014 and has the
obligation to put preventive measures into effect. A review of the literature reveals
only two studies which involve the implementation of a program to reduce
aggressive behaviors in relationships among high-school students and testing their
effectiveness (Yıldırım, 2012; Yorgun, 2007), and no studies specifically targeting
dating violence. The present study aims to fill this gap by developing, implementing
and evaluating a dating violence prevention program for college students in Istanbul
and has three main goals: 1) Creating the first dating violence prevention program in
Turkey by utilizing a feminist clinical perspective as a theoretical basis, 2) Providing
a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and building the
quantitative evidence base for its impact, 3) Investigating the processes and
mechanisms of transformation or its lack thereof qualitatively and addressing the
scarcity of qualitative research in the field of dating violence prevention.

The present program aims to promote equality in dating relationships as an
antidote to violence, introduce the notions of non-violence, power balance,
autonomy, mutuality and responsibility, increase knowledge about various forms of
violence and control tactics, and present an opportunity to learn and practice new
emotional and relational skills. The program is designed to be implemented in a
mixed-sex small-group format, targeting issues related to perpetration and
victimization, based on the premise that both young men and women may engage in

violence situationally (Johnson, 2011), mutually (Capaldi & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2012; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999) and at comparable rates (Straus, 2011) in college student and community samples. The content of the program is guided by a feminist clinical framework by providing education about issues of power imbalance, equality, and violence, as well as supporting emotional and relational skills, which as a whole taps into the needs and expectations of partners and couples characterized by Johnson's situational violence or intimate terrorism typology. The program addresses college students since the quality of dating relationships in adolescence and young adulthood has implications for personality growth, social development, psychological and relational functioning in later stages of life (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009) and accumulating evidence shows that perpetration and victimization rates are high and has serious implications for health and well-being (Eshelman & Levendosky, 2012; Foshee et al., 2013; Oswalt et al., 2018; Teten et al., 2009).

A mixed-methods approach is adapted to test the effectiveness of the program and to investigate the subjective meanings and processes mobilized throughout the process. The quantitative part utilizes a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design and explores the program's effect on five outcome measures: emotion approach coping, constructive conflict resolution, ambivalent sexism, ambivalent attitudes towards men, attitudes towards dating violence. The analyses focused on testing the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The prevention group engages in more emotional approach coping during a relational conflict than the control group at posttest, controlling for the effect of differences in prior emotional approach coping.

Hypothesis 2: The prevention group shows more accommodative behavior during a relational conflict than the control group at posttest, controlling for the effect of differences in prior conflict resolution behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: The prevention group reports less ambivalent sexism than the control group at posttest, controlling for the effect of differences in such attitudes prior to the group.

Hypothesis 4: The prevention group reports less ambivalent attitudes towards men than the control group at posttest, controlling for the effect of differences in such attitudes prior to the group.

Hypothesis 5: The prevention group reports less accepting attitudes towards dating violence than the control group at posttest, controlling for the effect of differences in such attitudes prior to the group.

The qualitative part utilizes semi-structured individual interviews to explore the subjective experiences of college students throughout the program, to understand the processes which facilitate and hinder change towards equal relationships, to shed some light on the backlash and lack of change evidenced in previous research (Hamby, 2006), and to learn about feedback and suggestions for improving the program in detail.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

This chapter explains the steps involved in developing the dating violence prevention program implemented in the present research and presents information about quantitative and qualitative data collection processes.

2.1 Program development

Program development was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved conducting pilot interviews between May-August 2016 with college students to gain familiarity with what they knew and thought about various forms of violence, how they explained them and what solutions they suggested to prevent violence in intimate relationships. In the second phase covering the period between June-September 2016, the first draft of the program was developed on the basis of the pilot interviews and a review of the available programs. In the third phase between September-December 2016, two pilot groups were conducted and the first draft of the program was revised according to the feedback received and observations made during implementation.

2.1.1 Pilot interviews and emerging themes

A pilot study was conducted to generate the program's content and to increase the program's relevance for the target group. The aims of this pilot study were to understand college students' ideas, attitudes, observations and explanations about

dating violence and to explore their suggestions and solutions to prevent and eliminate violence in romantic relationships. The pilot study, approved by the ethics committee on 14 June 2016, involved a total of 19 interviews with 9 young women and 10 young men at Bogazici University and Istanbul Bilgi University. They identified themselves as heterosexuals with an age range of 19-25 and had a dating relationship which lasted longer than 3 months. The participants were selected to maximize their similarity with potential group members who might take part in the program in the process of actual data collection. All participants gained extra credit for a psychology course in exchange for their participation. The interviews took 25-48 minutes to complete and required participants to answer 9 open-ended questions about various forms of violence in dating relationships, explanations of violence and suggestions for preventive work. The interviews were transcribed by three student assistants and thematically grouped.

The interviews showed that the most common issues which caused conflicts and arguments between young dating partners and couples were jealousy, control, differences and lack of communication. Jealousy emerged in almost all the interviews as the main reason underlying relational problems among college students and created problems about contact with same-sex and opposite-sex friends, lifestyle, appearance, use of time and networking in social media. Described as an unbearable emotion by some participants, jealousy was explained by feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Most young women mentioned that jealousy took the form of exerting control over what the partner did, wore or went to, and restricting the partner's choices. For some participants, jealousy and restrictive control was rooted in an understanding of intimacy as possessive belongingness, and a lack of acceptance of the partner's personal interests, and targeted the partner's individuality. A related, yet

less frequently mentioned issue was handling differences in expectations, ideas, beliefs and viewpoints, which triggered attempts to insist on one's perspective, convince the partner and prove oneself to be right or brought along comments about separation. In addition, a couple of participants emphasized lack of communication skills to express oneself and listen to the partner in an empathic manner. Overall, those comments indicated that issues around personal boundaries, power exertion, accepting differences and communication were at the core of the relational and emotional dynamics of the participants' experiences in intimacy and dating.

Regarding physical violence, the participants showed a clear understanding of what it entailed and gave examples of a wide range of behaviors which might physically harm the partner such as intimidating the partner, throwing things at the partner, beating up, hitting, punching, slapping, pushing and shoving. Most participants openly expressed their disapproval of physical violence in intimate relationships, while a couple of young men talked about women as triggers of extreme reactions and gave a hint of rationalization discourses about violence. Almost all participants referred to different socialization experiences of girls and boys and different social values they acquired to explain physical violence which was mostly construed as a male phenomenon, with men learning to protect, possess and control the partner, take charge of the relationship and to prove their superiority and authority, and women learning to show unlimited tolerance, adapt to the partner's moods and expectations, be calm and polite. Such values were conveyed through media, social or family relationships, functioning to turn feelings of insecurity, anxiety and threat into a sense of entitlement, and replacing communication and open expression. Essentialist discourses about male physical strength also emerged when some participants were probed further into sex

differences in perpetration of physical violence, including references to men's natural power and bodily superiority.

Psychological violence was clearly defined as intentionally creating emotional pain in the partner, including behaviors such as shouting, raising one's voice, nagging, constricting one's life, threatening to reveal secrets or private information, manipulating the partner, scolding, constantly criticizing, degrading, blaming, devaluing and putting pressure on the partner. Most participants explained that psychological violence was closely linked to a sense of intolerance for the partner's individuality and separateness, a willingness to monopolize and control the partner's time and life, and a desire to change the partner's mind and win a power struggle. In most interviews, psychological violence was considered as a gender-neutral form of violence which the partners engaged in to exhibit their power and superiority, compensate for their sense of weakness and insufficiency, communicate feelings of pain, fear and anger, make the partner feel as one did, and manage the fear of losing the partner. Some participants indicated that psychological violence was interpreted as a sign of love and protectiveness of the partner, particularly by some women, and that the understanding of intimacy as endless tolerance and acceptance paved the way for it. Due to such normalization, psychological violence could be difficult to recognize. Although a minority gave reference to the idea that aggression and destructiveness were natural, most participants emphasized the different socialization processes which construed women as emotional and men as lacking an emotional life.

Regarding sexual violence, most women and men in the present study provided an articulate description of the phenomenon, putting emphasis on objectifying the partner, using force or psychological pressure to have sexual or

51

physical contact and manipulating the partner, while a minority was more ambiguous in their responses, focused more on extreme examples rather than real-life experiences and confused unusual sexual behaviors with violence. Most participants indicated the dominance of social gender norms in the domain of sexuality, with young men feeling pressured to have as many sexual experiences as possible to prove their masculinity and young women feeling obliged to accept sexuality, conceal their discomfort or veil their desire. Sexual violence was explained by cultural norms about sexuality in most accounts, while a couple of participants referred to biological differences between males and females in terms of sexual desire as an explanation of it.

Digital violence was a new term for almost all of the participants. After some reflection, the behaviors that they came up with were restricting the partner's use of social media, criticizing the partner for sharing certain photos or having certain friends in social networking sites, constantly calling or sending text messages to control what the partner was doing, and putting pressure on the partner to send sexually revealing photos. Some participants commented on the ease of being abusive via digital means, emphasizing young men's and women's equal access to them and a sense of anonymity and distance. The accounts of the participants suggested that their understanding of digital violence was situated in a relational dynamic of control, restriction and jealousy which evoked questions about personal space and individuality.

The interviews inquired into the participants' suggestions about what steps to take to prevent or eliminate violence in dating and romantic relationships among young college students. Most of the participants emphasized the pivotal role of addressing normative gender roles and patriarchal beliefs framing intimate

relationships between men and women, with frequent references to media, television programs and wider socialization processes consolidating them. Some of the suggested solutions were questioning generalizations about male and females roles, challenging the normalization and justification of men's dominance and use of violence, calling into question the equation of masculinity with superiority, and femininity with passivity and tolerance, resisting relational expectations which reflected patriarchal values and traditional gender norms, and freeing oneself from the rules and norms defined and reinforced by the society. Another frequently mentioned solution was developing a notion of intimacy which incorporated an acceptance of difference, individuality and separateness, and developing alternative forms of relating to the other. Some participants explained that coming to terms with the fact that the partner had a separate mind and recognizing the significance of personal space were the main steps to prevent violence between dating partners. From their point of view, such an understanding of individuality would help to control possessiveness, recognize boundaries and manage closeness, and facilitate observing and exploring self, and constructing a more mature, self-aware identity. A couple of participants also touched upon how such a perspective would serve to resist the social pressures to have a partner and to cope with the stigmatization of being single.

Learning to communicate with the partner was mentioned as an antidote to violence in dating relationships. Some participants shared their observations of other couples who could not talk to each other and emphasized the significance of developing verbal skills, openly expressing oneself and listening to the partner for establishing safer relationships. In a couple of accounts, this suggestion was rooted in the belief that violence emerged as a means of self-expression in the absence of

alternative ways to do so. Increasing self-confidence emerged as another solution which was expected to decrease fears of losing the other and concerns over proving one's dominance. A couple of participants suggested that gaining more experience in dating and getting into contact with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives would support this endeavor. The issue of anger control came up in a minority of interviews as a way to exercise more control over emotions and take responsibility to do so.

In some accounts, more problematic suggestions came up. One such suggestion was making sacrifices for the other and complying with the partner's demands to avoid conflict and violence. Such accounts emphasized tolerance, patience, understanding and compromise in reaction to violence perpetrated by the partner. Other accounts focused solely on women's responsibility to initiate change and resist violence, put forward an idealized notion of women as mothers and experts in managing relations, and casted men as naively passive in achieving safety.

Overall, the themes identified in the pilot interviews showed the participants' basic level of knowledge about dating violence and indicated that issues around intimacy and personal space, self-confidence, self-expression and patriarchal gender roles framed their understanding of violence. The participants' explanatory frameworks about violence were rooted in a firm and undisputed understanding of sex differences which were believed to be partly socially constructed and partly essentialist. The results informed the development of the first draft of the program, increased its relevance for the college students targeted in the present study, and helped to familiarize the main group facilitator with their meaning making perspectives and the language they used to describe their experiences in dating relationships.

2.1.2 The first draft of the program

The first draft of the program was designed to enhance the students' knowledge of various forms of violence, to support them in identifying and resisting violent and controlling behaviors they encountered in their romantic relations, provide a space to reflect on self, mobilize their sense of agency about establishing safe, equal and autonomous relationships and introduce the notions of responsibility and equality. The main sources of information for the first draft of the program were the voices of the students interviewed in the first phase and the available publications about dating violence prevention, gender equality and psycho-educational groups. The themes emerging in the pilot interviews with the students were used to guide decisions about the topics to be included in the program. Incorporating the students' voices into to the process of setting goals and identifying topics was a priority as well as offering a comprehensive perspective about violence and control in intimate relationships. Informed by the pilot interviews, the program tried to address issues of individual boundaries, personal space, control and power, and incorporated examples from real-life situations which were mentioned in the pilot interviews as reasons for conflict and violence into role-play scenarios.

To select the activities for the first draft of the program, a review of the literature for published programs by academics as well as non-governmental organizations was carried out. The main publications reviewed were the programs called Heartbeat: Relationships without Violence which was supported by the Daphne-Program of the European Commission and developed by a collaboration among activists from Germany, Hungary, Austria, Great Britain and Spain to prevent violence in teenage romantic relationships (Köberlein et al., 2010), Gender Equality Awareness Raising for Intimate Partner Violence which was designed by the

European Anti-Violence Network in Greece to prevent intimate partner violence among adolescents and to offer a standardized curricula to be followed in schools (Ntinapogias, Petroulaki, & Tsirigoti, 2011; Tsirigoti, Petroulaki, & Ntinapogias, 2011a, 2011b), and The Youth Relationships Project which was developed by a collaboration among teachers, sociologists and psychologists in Canada to provide a package of activities to prevent violence in teenage intimate relationships and to support healthy relationships (Wolfe et al., 1996). Each of the programs were examined in detail and some activities were selected to be revised and used in the first draft of the present program. The activities were selected on the basis of their suitability for the present aims and the students' voices, appropriateness for the college population, potential for facilitating self-reflection and increasing knowledge of violent relationships dynamics. In addition to those programs, books and other published resources for group-based work and psycho-educational groups were reviewed (Belmont, 2006; Brown, 2013; Elliott, 1994) as well as websites which aimed to raise awareness and increase information about dating violence among teenagers and young people (loveisrespect.org, 40tilkiblog.wordpress.com, morcati.org). From these resources, various activities were selected which would minimize didactic teaching and facilitate exploration of self as well as others' ideas, involve various modes of expression like drawing, include physical movement and had the potential to increase curiosity and engagement with the group. A package of activities were brought together to prepare the first draft of the program.

2.1.3 Pilot groups and revisions

Two pilot groups were conducted to test whether the first draft of the program worked efficiently in terms of group dynamics, content and time, to gain experience as a group facilitator and to make the necessary revisions before finalizing the program. The pilot groups were conducted in Fall 2016 with students at the Psychology Department. The first pilot group involved 15 young women and 3 young men whose ages ranged from 21 to 26 and participated in the group to fulfill a course requirement. A second pilot group was considered as necessary to increase the main group facilitator's practice, train a male co-facilitator, and observe whether participation could be sustained over a period of 2 months when it was not a course requirement and when the group was smaller and younger, as planned in the actual data collection. The second pilot group was conducted with 5 women and 4 men between 19-20 years of age who participated in the program in exchange of course credit. All members in the pilot groups identified themselves as heterosexual.

The members from the two pilot groups shared their experiences and feedback about the program. In the first pilot group, a brief discussion was held about the impact of the program on their lives and their suggestions for improvement in the last session. Discussion notes were written down after the last session. In the second pilot group, individual interviews was conducted to learn about their reactions, ideas and feedback and to test if the interview guide was helpful to generate data within one week following the last session. The interviews which took 20-45 minutes to complete were conducted and transcribed by the main group facilitator. The notes of discussion from the first pilot group and the transcribed interviews from the second pilot group were used to examine and revise the first draft of the program and to prepare its final form.

Regarding positive experiences throughout the program, the pilot group members reported that the group created a sense of connectedness and belongingness which they enjoyed and provided them with a space to explore diverse opinions and peer norms about relationships. The observations the members made in the group offered a reference point to reflect on their relationships and their own behaviors, broadened their perspective and brought along a different way of thinking about conflicts. Participating in the group supported most group members' sense of confidence in themselves and increased their willingness to practice solving relational problems, setting personal boundaries and understanding their partners. Particularly for those women who had experienced dating violence previously, the group served as a reminder of their self-worth. The aspects of the program that the pilot group members most liked pertained to the composition of the group which was considered as diverse, the group discussions which allowed for open expression of ideas and listening to others, and the group climate which was experienced as accepting and non-judgmental. The most favorite activities were role plays, creating room for spontaneous self-expression and self-observation, and other creative activities, opening various channels of communication with others and exploration of their ideas. The most appealing topics in the program were psychological violence and sexuality.

With respect to negative feedback, the program was criticized by a couple of group members on the grounds that it portrayed a perfect, unrealistic relationship and supported rationality at the expense of romance and love. Regarding role-plays, some group members reported a sense of alienation from the activity since their usual reactions would not be consistent with the role they were supposed to play and suggested to focus on typical behaviors they showed in their daily lives and to have

more flexibility in deciding what role to play instead of following a predefined theme. Other suggestions were increasing the number of sessions to talk more about sexuality, psychological violence or personal experiences, increasing session length to discuss each topic more deeply, giving weekly assignments to facilitate more active engagement, recommending further information sources such as websites or books regarding each topic, and including LGBTQ members to increase diversity in the group.

The following changes were made on the basis of observations in the pilot groups and the feedback received from group members: 1) the number of activities implemented in each session was reduced to have sufficient time to reflect on and process the group members' observations, experiences, feelings and thoughts deeply, and to provide equal space to every member; 2) role-play instructions were changed to probe reflection on personal experiences and incorporate typical real-life behaviors into the role-play; 3) adding assignments relevant to the topics of each session to facilitate observation of and reflection on self and relationships; 4) brief informative brochures were prepared to probe thinking and increase knowledge of common characteristics of violent relationships. The number and the length of the sessions were kept as they were because of concerns over making sustained participation more difficult and increasing the drop-out rate. The group's focus on sharing observations, ideas and feelings about the activities implemented and the topics discussed within the group remained because the group was not designed as a psychotherapeutic process or in a support group format which would focus more on personal experiences outside the group. The features of the final program are presented in Table 1. The full program is available upon request.

Table 1. The topics, Aims and Activities of the Final Program

Session	Main Topic	Aims	Activities
1	Introduction	• Meeting with group members • Establishing communication among group members • Introducing the topic of safe and unsafe relationships	I. Who is Your Partner? II. Sentence Completion: Why Am I Here? III. Group Discussion: Group Rules IV. Group Discussion: Characteristics of Safe and Unsafe Relationships/Behaviors
2	Psychological Violence	• Raising self-awareness about ways of expressing anger • Exploring unsafe and violent ways of expressing anger • Informing members about verbal abuse	I. Sentence Completion: When I Get Angry II. Traffic Lights: Safe or Unsafe? III. Role Play: Expressing Anger in Unsafe Ways
3	Psychological Violence	• Exploring safe ways of expressing anger • Raising self-awareness about anger control strategies • Informing members about psychological violence	I. Role Play: Expressing Anger in Safe Ways II. Role Play: How to Control Anger During an Argument III. Sentence Completion: One Step That I Can Take
4	Power and Control	• Exploring signs of power imbalance in intimate relationships • Informing members about controlling behaviors	I. Body Sculpture: Power Imbalance II. Video Discussion: Can You See Me? III. Group Discussion: Restoring Balance
5	Personal Boundaries and Physical Violence	• Identifying and setting boundaries in intimate relationships • Practicing how to say no • Informing members about physical violence and cycle of violence	I. How Far You Would Go? II. Visualization and Drawing: My Boundary III. Role Play: How to Say «No» in Safe and Unsafe Ways
6	Jealousy and Digital Violence	• Understanding jealousy in intimate relationships • Practicing ways to express jealousy in safe ways • Informing members about digital violence	I. Visualization: Components of jealousy II. Role Play: Destructive jealousy III. Role Play: Constructive jealousy and mirroring emotions
7	Consent and Sexual Violence	• Defining and introducing sexual boundaries and consent • Identifying steps for giving and taking consent • Informing members about sexual safety and consent	I. Scenario Discussions: Personal Responsibilities for Sexual Safety II. Video Discussion: Tea As Consent III. Role Play: Coping with Sexual Coercion
8	Overall Evaluation	• Saying goodbye and exploring emotions about completing the process • Making an overall evaluation about the process • Completing posttest assessments	I. Group Puzzle: The Meaning of the Group II. Body Sculpture: Emotions about Closure III. Sentence Completion: What I Have Learned about myself/relationships IV. Posttest

2.2 Quantitative data collection and analysis

2.2.1 Procedure

The present research design involved a pretest-posttest comparison of the prevention groups which received the 8-session psycho-educational program and the control group which did not receive any intervention. The research was approved by the ethics committee at Bogazici University. The prevention groups participated in the information session, received the program and completed the posttest assessment. The participants in the prevention groups were invited to an initial information session which aimed to explain the process of the program, to answer their questions and to complete pretest questionnaires. In this session, a list of weekly themes which would be covered in the program was presented and rules of attendance were explained. At the end of this session, informed consent was obtained and pretest questionnaires were administered to the participants.

The researcher and two male co-facilitators implemented eight weekly consecutive sessions to five prevention groups over a 3 month period. The groups started in February 2017 and finished in early May 2017. Two male co-facilitators who were both in their second year in the Clinical Psychology MA program assisted the researcher to increase the relevance of the group for men and to prevent polarization between sexes in the groups. The sessions were organized weekly for each group, except the Spring Break in April 2017 which corresponded to the period between session 6 and 7 for three groups, session 7 and 8 for one group, session 5 and 6 for another group. The sessions took 1.5-2 hours to complete each week. At the end of the eighth session, the participants filled out the posttest questionnaires which inquired into their experiences in the last 2 months in dating relationships if they had

a partner during the group and in friendships if they had not been dating during that time.

The control group participants had two testing sessions which were separated by 2.5 months and synchronized with the assessments of the prevention groups. In the first session which took place in February 2017, informed consent was obtained and pretest questionnaires were implemented. The participants were informed about the two phases and their e-mail addresses were collected to contact them for the second phase. In May 2017, those who participated in the first phase were contacted individually via e-mail to invite them for the posttest assessment. The researcher and an undergraduate psychology student organized and managed the two testing sessions which took 20-30 minutes to complete.

The researcher assigned a specific code to each participant at pretest to ensure anonymity and to minimize the influence of the researcher's expectations on responding. The codes were composed of the group number and a random number for the prevention group (i.e. Group1-01, Group 5-02), and the letter C and a random number for the control group (i.e. C-03, C-37). The questionnaires with specific codes on them were administered at pretest and posttest. The prevention group participants gained 5 extra points for a psychology course if they did not miss more than 2 sessions overall and completed the posttest questionnaires. The control group received 3 extra points if they completed both pretest and posttest assessments. The questionnaires were counter-balanced at pretest and posttest, with some forms beginning with behavioral measures and the others beginning with attitudinal measures.

2.2.2 Recruitment and participants

For recruiting the prevention and control group participants, students who took introductory level courses from the department of psychology at Bogazici and Bilgi Universities were targeted. For the prevention group, the first step was to upload a flyer to the moodle system for PSY 101 students at Bogazici and to e-mail it to PSY 103 and PSY 111 students at Bilgi. The flyer provided brief information about the content and the length of the program, addressed some common problems in college students' romantic relationships like jealousy, anger, safety, included contact details of the researcher and involved questions about the age, department and university of the applicants. At Bogazici, 759 students were enrolled to the PSY 101 class and had access to the moodle system. In 2 days, 124 (% 16) students contacted the researcher via e-mail to apply to the program. At Bilgi, 303 students received the flyer via email and 25 (% 8) students applied in 10 days. Thus, the program at Bilgi was cancelled because of the insufficient number of applicants.

In the second step, the age range of 124 applicants at Bogazici were examined and 8 of them were excluded either because they were older than 22 or they did not provide information on their age. A doodle link with planned times and dates for the program over 9 weeks (including an information session) was sent to the remaining 116 applicants (70 female, 46 male). The response rate to the doodle link was % 56 with 18 male and 47 female applicants selecting the dates and times suitable for their attendance to the program. Five groups were formed based on the following criteria a) the participants should be between 18-22 years of age, b) the number of female and male participants in each group should be equal, if possible, c) the participants in each group should attend different departments, if possible, d) the participants can be involved in the program regardless of their dating history, current dating status or

sexual orientation, e) 9-12 participants should be assigned to each group. For these five groups, 55 applicants were invited to an information session. The remaining 10 applicants who were not invited because of a lack of available spaces were contacted via e-mail to include them in the control group. They were told that the researcher conducted another experiment that they could participate in for extra credits. Four participants did not show up for the information session and 3 participants dropped out after the session either because they did not want to commit their time to the program or felt disturbed by some of the questions they answered at pretest assessment. In the third step, the snowballing technique was used to fill the empty spaces left by drop-outs and to increase the number of men in the groups. Those who decided to participate in the program referred their friends who were willing to attend. In addition, previous male applicants for the pilot groups conducted in Fall 2017 were contacted individually by the researcher and invited to the groups. In the end, four mixed-sex groups and one all women group were formed. A sample of 54 participants (37 female, 17 male) started to attend the program and 7 female participants (% 13) dropped out before posttest assessment. Among those who completed the program, % 40 attended to all sessions, % 38 missed one session and % 21 missed two sessions.

For recruiting control group participants, a different flyer was hanged on the board of the Psychology Department for PSY 101 students at Bogazici University. The flyer contained brief information about the two phases, rules of attendance and contact details of the researcher, and a sign-up sheet. Ninety eight participants registered for the research over a week and completed the pretest assessment. Two participants dropped out of the research (% 4) and did not complete the posttest assessment.

The final sample included 47 prevention (30 female, 17 male) and 96 control (60 female, 36 male) participants. The age ranges were 18-22 with a mean of 19.6 for the prevention group and 18-31 with a mean of 19.6 for the control group. The majority of the sample was heterosexual (% 85 in the prevention group, % 97 in the control group). Regarding current dating status, % 72 of the control group (n=69) did not have a dating partner at pretest, while nearly half of the prevention group (% 49, n= 23) had been in a dating relationship.

2.2.3 Instruments

2.2.3.1 The revised conflict tactics scale (CTS2)

Originally developed by Straus (1979) and revised by Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman (1996), the CTS2 measures the prevalence and the chronicity of victimization and perpetration of violence with an intimate partner. The scale is composed of 78 items which involve behavioral descriptions of various forms of violence and has 5 subscales, including negotiation, physical assault, psychological aggression, sexual coercion and injury. In the scale, the participants are asked to indicate whether and to what extent they and their partners engaged in certain behaviors in the past year or ever on an 8-point scale (0: Never, 1: Once, 2: Twice, 3: 3-5 times, 4: 6-10 times, 5: 11-20 times, 6: More than 20 times, 7: Before last year) (See Appendix B for sample items). The CTS2 has been shown to have good internal consistency, relatively high Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from .79 to .95 for 5 subscales, construct and discriminant validity (Straus et al., 1996) and cross-cultural reliability (Straus, 2004).

The CTS2 was adapted to Turkish by Aba (2008). Aba and Kulakac (2016) showed that the Turkish CTS2 had adequate internal reliability with an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of .92 and with alpha coefficients ranging from .76 to .89 for subscales. The authors also reported that the scale had good test-retest reliability with correlation coefficients ranging from .97 and 1.00 over a 4-week period, and adequate content and construct validity in a sample of college students. In the present study, three sub-scales including 54 items from the original CTS2 were used to measure the number of physically, psychologically and sexually violent behaviors perpetrated or experienced by the participants with their partners in the previous year. In the present sample, the Cronbach alpha coefficients of the subscales were found to be .78, .82 and .60 for physical assault, psychological aggression and sexual coercion subscales, respectively. Because the reports of physical and sexual violence perpetration and victimization were rare in the present sample, two composite scores, one for victimization and one for perpetration, were formed by summing the scores on the three sub-scales. Higher scores indicate a higher number of violent acts perpetrated or experienced in the last year.

2.2.3.2 Responses to dissatisfaction scale (RDS)

The RDS was developed and revised by Rusbult and colleagues to measure individuals' responses to frustration and dissatisfaction in their intimate relationships (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991; Kilpatrick, Bissonnette, & Rusbult, 2002). The scale has 16 items and 4 sub-scales, namely exit, voice, loyalty and neglect, which differ along the continuums of activity-passivity and constructiveness-destructiveness (Rusbult & Zembrodt, 1983). The RDS consists of

descriptions of various reactions to relational problems and asks the respondents to report how often they show them on 9-point scale (1: Never, 9: Always) (See Appendix C for sample items). The scale yields four subscale scores as well as an overall accommodation score calculated by reverse coding items tapping into destructive responses. In previous studies, the RDS was found to have good internal consistency with Cronbach alpha coefficients for subscales ranging from .61 to .92 and adequate test-retest reliability with correlation coefficients of .80 and .84 (Kilpatrick et al., 2002; Rusbult et al., 1991).

The RDS was adapted to Turkish by a number of researchers and found to be a valid and reliable tool in college student samples (Cirakoglu, 2006; Taluy, 2013). Taluy (2013) identified 4 factors similar to the original scale and reported that the scale had adequate construct validity, criterion validity, test-retest reliability and internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .79 overall and .68, .80, .74 and .53 for exit, voice, loyalty and neglect subscales, respectively. Cirakoglu (2006) also reported 4 factors which have adequate internal consistency with Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from .57 to .73 and provided evidence of concurrent validity for the RDS.

In the present study, the scale was used to measure the participants' reactions to conflicts in terms of their activity/passivity and constructiveness/destructiveness, and compare the difference between pretest and posttest scores. The alpha coefficients for exit, voice, loyalty and neglect subscales at pretest and posttest were found to be lower than adequate, with scores ranging from .49 to .77, and the subscale scores were excluded from analysis. An overall accommodation score was calculated by reverse coding those items which tapped into destructive responses, eliminating four items which had item-total correlation coefficients lower than .20

(Item 4 and Item 12 from the neglect subscale, Item 11 and 16 from the loyalty subscale) and taking the mean of the remaining 12 items. The alpha coefficients for the accommodation score were found to be .77 and .78 for pretest and posttest, respectively. Higher scores indicate a higher propensity towards accommodative behavior in a relational conflict.

2.2.3.3 Emotional approach coping scale (EACS)

The EACS was developed by Stanton, Kirk, Cameron, and Danoff-Burg (2000) to measure the extent to which people cope with stressful situations by actively engaging with and expressing their emotional reactions. The scale has two components, namely emotion processing which measures the ability to understand and identify emotions, and emotion expression which taps into the ability to verbalize and show them. The scale has dispositional and situational versions, with the former treating emotional processing and expression as general tendencies and the latter focusing on the use of those processes in the face of specific stressors. The EACS consists of 16 items which asks participants to report how frequently they engage in processing and expressing their emotions on a 5-point scale (1: Never, 5: Always) in general or in response to specific situations (See Appendix D for sample items). Stanton and colleagues (2000) have shown that the subscales had adequate internal consistency with alpha coefficients ranging from .72 to .92 and had high test-retest reliability over 4 weeks. The authors also provided evidence of the EACS's convergent, divergent and predictive validity in four studies conducted with college samples.

The EACS was adapted to Turkish by Senol-Durak and Durak (2011). The authors reported high internal consistency for the total scale, emotion processing and emotion expression subscales, with alpha coefficients of .90, .85 and .90, respectively, and provided some evidence of concurrent and discriminant validity in a sample of college students and community members. In the present research, the situational version of the EACS was used to measure the participants' active attempts to understand and express their emotions when they experience a relational conflict with a dating partner or a friend and to compare pretest and posttest scores. For this purpose, two subscale scores for emotion processing and emotion expression were calculated by taking the mean of relevant items. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the two subscales were .86 and .90 for pretest, and .87 and .92 for posttest, respectively. Higher scores indicate a higher propensity towards coping through emotion-approach in a relational conflict situation.

2.2.3.4 Ambivalent sexism scale (ASI)

The ASI scale was originally developed by Glick and Fiske (1996) and revised by Glick and colleagues (2000) to measure different facets of sexist attitudes and became one of the most widely used measures of sexism. The scale assesses hostile sexism which indicates openly negative and antagonistic attitudes toward women and construes women as controlling, competitive and opportunistic, and benevolent sexism which taps into beliefs about fragility and naivety of women and represents the understanding that women need to be protected and complemented by men. The ASI has 22 statements which are rated on a 6-point Likert type scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 6: Strongly Agree) (See Appendix E for sample items). Glick and Fiske

(1996) showed that the hostile and benevolent sexism subscales had high internal consistency with alpha coefficients ranging from .73 to .92, and adequate convergent and predictive validity. Glick and colleagues (2000) also provided evidence of construct validity of the ASI scale in a cross-national study of 19 countries, including Turkey.

The ASI was adapted to Turkish by Sakalli-Ugurlu (2002). In a sample of university students, Sakalli-Ugurlu (2002) reported that the scale had two reliable factors with alpha coefficients of .87 for hostile sexism and .78 for benevolent sexism and a test-retest correlation coefficient of .87 over a 3-week period and provided evidence of construct and criterion-related validity. In the present research, the scale is used to measure the participants' support for negative or protective attitudes towards women and conduct pretest-posttest comparisons. Two subscale scores for hostile and benevolent sexism were calculated by taking the mean of the related items, with the former having a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .93 and the latter yielding to a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .89 both at pretest and posttest. Higher scores indicate more sexist attitudes towards women.

2.2.3.5 Ambivalence towards men inventory (AMI)

The AMI is a 20-item self-report measure of ambivalent attitudes towards men. The inventory was developed by Glick and Fiske (1999) to measure hostile and benevolent attitudes toward men, with the former indicating a negative and critical approach to men and the latter characterizing men as dependent, childish and unskilled in certain domains. According to Glick and Fiske (1999), this ambivalence is a reaction to the simultaneous positioning of men and women as social groups

which establish a hierarchical relationship and compete for power, and as partners who emotionally and sexually depend on and complement each other. The scale consists of statements about the differences between men's and women's roles and behaviors, and contain items which indicate men's inferiority, dependency or need for control. Participants are asked to report the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items on a 6-point Likert type scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 6: Strongly Agree) (See Appendix F for sample items). Glick and Fiske (1999) reported adequate reliability coefficients which range from .81 to .86 for hostility towards men and from .79 to .83 for benevolence toward men in a series of 3 studies with undergraduate student and adult samples and provided evidence of convergent validity. In another study, Glick and colleagues (2004) founded that the two-factor structure emerged in samples from 16 nations and provided evidence on the construct validity of the inventory.

The Turkish version of the inventory was developed by Sakalli-Ugurlu (2008) and found to have adequate validity and reliability. Sakalli-Ugurlu (2008) showed that the alpha coefficients of the hostile attitude and benevolent attitude items were .82 and .83 and that the inventory showed adequate test-retest reliability over a 3-week period with a correlation coefficient of .80. In the present research, the inventory was used to measure the participants' ambivalent attitudes towards men and investigate any changes observed from pretest to posttest. The mean scores for hostile and benevolent attitudes were calculated for both assessments. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the two scores were found to be .84 and .90 for pretest, and .85 and .86 for posttest, respectively. Higher scores indicate more ambivalence towards men.

2.2.3.6 Attitudes towards dating violence scales (ADVS)

Attitudes towards dating violence scales are a group of six scales which measure attitudes towards psychological, physical and sexual violence in heterosexual relationships. The scales, developed by Price and colleagues (1999) to be implemented in adolescent populations, measure attitudes towards the three forms of violence directed at females by male partners and at males by female partners separately. The scale consists of statements about behaviors like controlling the partner, restricting the partner out of jealousy, yelling at the partner and asks respondents to evaluate the extent to which such behaviors are acceptable on a 5-point Likert type scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 5: Strongly Agree) (See Appendix G for sample items). Price and colleagues (1999) found that the alpha coefficients of the scales ranged from .75 to .87, and reported evidence of construct and criterion-related validity.

Attitude towards psychological and physical violence scales were adapted to Turkish by Yumusak (2013). Yumusak and Sahin (2014) reported that the scales had alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .87 and yielded to a one-factor solution similar to the original scales in a sample of college students. In the present research, the scale was implemented at pretest and posttest to investigate the effectiveness of the program in changing accepting attitudes toward dating violence. A total of four mean scores were calculated to measure male-to-female (M-to-F) and female-to-male (F-to-M) psychological and physical violence for both assessments. An examination of the items of the M-to-F violence scales revealed that one item (Item 4) from the psychological violence scale had a low item-total correlation coefficient and excluded from the calculation of scores. The alpha coefficients for M-to-F psychological and physical violence were found to be .81 and .82 at pretest, and .83

and .79 at posttest, respectively. Regarding the attitudes towards F-to-M violence, one item (Item 47) from the physical violence scale was eliminated due to an unacceptably low item-total correlation coefficient. The alpha coefficients for F-to-M psychological violence were .83 at pretest and .81 at posttest, while the coefficient for physical violence was .87 at pretest and .86 at posttest. Higher scores indicate a more accepting attitude towards violence.

2.2.3.7 Therapeutic factors inventory (TFI)

The TFI was originally developed as a 99-item self-report measure of Yalom's psycho-therapeutic factors in group psychotherapy by Lese and MacNair-Semands (2000). Different and shorter versions of the inventory was developed to facilitate its use in group therapy settings (Joyce, MacNair-Semands, Tasca, & Ogrodniczuk, 2011; MacNair-Semands, Ogrodniczuk, & Joyce, 2010). The most recent form of the inventory is composed of 8 items which aim to assess a general group therapy factor, conceptualized as hopefulness about the group process (Tasca et al., 2014). The TFI-8 includes statements about positive feelings and experiences about the group and asks participants to rate each statement on a 7-point Likert type scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 7: Strongly Agree) (See Appendix H for sample items). Tasca and colleagues (2014) reported that TFI-8 has adequate internal reliability, provided evidence of its predictive and discriminant validity, and suggested that it is particularly suited to groups at early stages of group formation.

The original version of the inventory was adapted to Turkish by Turktan (2003). The author reported that 11 subscales in the original version had adequate alpha coefficients, ranging from .77 to .96. In the present research, the TFI-8 was

administered at posttest to measure the quality of the group process in the prevention groups and investigate its role on program outcomes. A mean score was calculated to assess the general psychotherapeutic group factor. The alpha coefficient of the inventory was found to be .88. Higher scores indicate more positive experiences in the group.

2.2.3.8 Marlowe-crowne social desirability scale (SDS)

The scale was developed by Marlowe and Crowne (1960) to measure the tendency to present oneself in a favorable light and refrain from giving honest responses out of a concern over social disapproval in self-report measures. In the original version, the scale have 33 statements about socially approved behaviors which are unlikely to be observed in daily life and the respondent is asked to indicate whether he/she engages in them in a yes-no format (See Appendix I for sample items). Shorter versions of the scale was developed to increase its use in psychological research (Reynolds, 1982). Reynolds (1982) recommended to use the 13-item version of the scale because of its good psychometric properties.

The scale was translated to Turkish by Köse and Sayar (2001). In the present study, the scale was used at the pretest assessment to measure and control for the tendency towards giving socially desirable responses, since violent behaviors and sexist attitudes are socially disapproved at the university context and might generate dishonest responses. A sum total score was calculated. Higher scores indicate a stronger tendency towards social desirability.

2.2.3.9 Adverse childhood experiences questionnaire (ACE)

The ACE was developed by Felitti and colleagues (1998) to measure the prevalence of experiences of psychological, physical and sexual abuse, neglect and family dysfunction before 18 years of age. The questionnaire is composed of 11 questions about parental behaviors and family life which potentially influences children adversely. For the present purposes, 7 questions were selected and used to measure adverse experiences which are known to increase the risk of violence perpetration and victimization in later life (See Appendix J for sample items). The participants are asked to indicate whether they have experienced any of the parental behaviors or family crisis described in a yes-no format. In the present study, the questionnaire was used to control for the effects of early childhood experiences on behavioral and attitudinal changes. Total score was calculated by summing the frequency of yes responses. Higher scores indicate a higher frequency of adverse experiences in childhood.

2.2.3.10 Demographic and personal information form

A 20-item form was developed by the researcher to collect information about demographic characteristics, dating status and history, and previous and current use of psychological and psychiatric support services (See Appendix K).

2.2.4 Approach to quantitative data analysis

The present analyses focused on a comparison between the prevention and control groups with regards to their pretest and posttest scores on the measured variables. A univariate approach was adopted and the factorial ANCOVA was selected as the preferred method of analysis, because it was recommended for pretest-posttest comparisons in quasi-experimental designs where the participants could not be randomly assigned to the prevention and control groups (Warner, 2013; Weinfurt, 2000), it allowed for including covariates into the model which reduced error variance (Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003; Field, 2013), it provided a way to control for differences between groups at pretest (Warner, 2013) and all the variables measured in this study targeted related, yet distinct processes.

The analyses focused on investigating the effect of the group (prevention, control) on posttest scores as well as exploring the impact of sex (female, male) and dating status (dating partner, no dating partner), controlling for pretest scores on the measured variable. Sex and dating status were selected as relevant independent variables because of their conceptual relevance and the results of qualitative data which pointed out potential differences in one's experiences in the program depending on one's sex and dating status. Besides pretest scores, the covariates which were planned to be included in the analyses were social desirability, childhood risk factors, and dating violence perpetration and victimization in the previous year. The decision to include them in the analyses was made on the basis of an examination of their correlations with posttest scores on each variable. An additional question was to explore if the general quality of the group experience had any impact on the posttest scores of the prevention groups.

In line with the recommendations of Warner (2013) and Field (2013), all assumptions were checked before running ANCOVAs by exploring the linear relationships between dependent variables and covariates as well as pairs of covariates, and examining the interactions between independent variables and covariates. There was no evidence of violations of assumptions for the reported analyses. A series of independent-samples t tests were performed to investigate the effect of the order by which the scales were presented on responses at pretest and posttest. None of the results were significant. Thus, the order of presentation was not included in further analyses.

To answer the research questions posed in the present study, it was decided to exclude the all-woman group from the sample. All analyses reported in this section were based on the data from mixed-gender groups, since the original question was to investigate the impact of participation in such groups on an array of behavioral and attitudinal measures and the all-woman group was organized for informing the qualitative part of data analysis and exploring potential differences in group dynamics. To prepare the data set for later analyses, the distribution of the sample by group, sex and dating status was examined and found to be fairly unequal, which increased the risk of Type I error by violating the assumption of homogeneity of variances (Warner, 2013). An examination of the distribution revealed that the number of women who didn't have a dating partner in the control group was considerably higher as compared to the prevention group. To create a more balanced sample distribution, 25 females who did not have a dating relationship at the start of the program were randomly selected from the control group and excluded from the analyses. The characteristics of the final sample are presented in the Quantitative Results section.

2.3 Qualitative data collection and analysis

2.3.1 Procedure

The present research design involved semi-structured individual interviews with the participants in the prevention groups which received the 8-session psycho-educational program. The prevention groups were informed about the interviews in the information session which was held one week before the start of the program. At the end of the eighth session, the interviews were scheduled individually with each participant as 30-minute slots to be held in the upcoming weeks and it was explained that the aim of the interviews was to understand their experiences throughout the group process and to receive feedback. An e-mail reminder which included information about the time, date and place of the interview was sent to each participant a couple of days prior to it.

An interview guide was developed and used to inquire into the participants' experiences in the group, the impact of the group on themselves, their relationships and their ways of thinking, or lack thereof, and included questions about their feedback and suggestions for improvement. The interview guide consisted of 6 open-ended questions which addressed the meaning of the group for their lives, explored any specific examples of transformations they experienced as a result of their participation in the group and investigated what made such transformation possible (See Appendix L). Before starting the interview, the participants were reminded of their rights to stop the audio-recording at any time they wanted, to withdraw from the study and to leave a question unanswered if it was disturbing for them in any way, and informed about how the recordings would be used. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a semi-structured format where any relevant and

interesting theme was probed further by the group facilitator and audio-recorded. They took place within one week after the completion of the program in May 2017 and lasted 15 to 45 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the group facilitator and three student assistants for qualitative analysis. The quotes which were presented in the analysis were translated to English (See Appendix M for their original versions).

2.3.2 Participants

A total of 56 interviews were conducted with the participants in the mixed-gender groups, the all-woman group and the second pilot group. Twenty-one young men and 35 young women shared their experiences, feelings and opinions about the program.

2.3.3 Approach to qualitative data analysis

The constructivist grounded theory (GT) approach was used to analyze 56 interviews conducted with members of the mixed-sex groups, the all-woman group and the second pilot group. The constructivist GT focuses on exploring the social processes through which meaning is contextually constructed and reflected in actions, explicating how these social processes and actions take place and how multiple realities are constructed, and understanding the co-creation of meaning by the researcher and the researched (Charmaz, 1990, 2006, 2008). This constructivist GT is rooted in the theory of symbolic interactionism which posits that meaning is created within dynamic social interactions. The emphasis on contextualized understanding of a process, the commitment to the notion of multiplicity and relativity of truth, the practice of researcher reflexivity, the intertwining of data collection and data

analysis, and the constant comparative method differentiate the it from other qualitative analysis approaches and distance it from its objectivist and positivist roots (Charmaz, 1990, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2017b). Analysis in the constructivist GT offers a systematic way of analyzing qualitative data and developing an overarching conceptualization of a social process grounded in the data rather than prior preconceptions, attempts to answer how questions and aims to generate "an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience" (p.4, Charmaz, 2006). Being one of the most widely used approaches to qualitative data analysis in the social sciences, the constructivist GT aligns itself with different epistemological positions and theories (Fassinger, 2005), including the critical theory which aims to address issues of power, inequality and injustice (Charmaz, 2017a, 2017b), and feminist theory (Plummer & Young, 2009; Wuest, 1995).

An abbreviated version of the constructivist grounded theory was used in the present study, which indicated the adoption of its all data analytic principles, except iterative data collection (Willig, 2013). The constructivist grounded theory approach was deemed suitable for the present purposes because the current study aimed to explore the process of transformation or its lack thereof after the group, account for multiple and diverse realities as well as similar patterns among group members, develop a contextual understanding of actions, and focus on the meaning of the group for members and the language they used to describe their experiences. The MAXQDA Version 12 was used to manage the 56 interviews and to carry out data analysis.

The analysis was carried out in three steps as described by Charmaz (2006). The first step, which is called open coding, involves an examination of each sentence and attaching a name to them to describe, summarize and frame their meaning. The

codes should be short, simple, tentative, and close to the data as much as possible with a particular a focus on actions. The process of open coding divides the whole data set into pieces and creates tools which are meaningful, clear and specific for further analysis. In this step, numerous codes were generated such as 'changing one's perspective', 'feeling surprised', 'listening to others', 'comparing oneself to others', 'suppressing anger' to start exploring the important dimensions and meanings in the present data set.

In the second step, called focused coding, the codes which repeat frequently and provide a conceptual insight into the processes, meanings and actions in the data are examined and selected for more focused exploration. By constantly making comparisons between group members and codes, the characteristics, dimensions, variations, contexts and conditions of significant actions and meanings are delineated. This phase starts to bring together the fragmented pieces of data at a more conceptual level, and focuses on constructing patterns and abstract categories on the basis of their conceptual grasp and explanatory power. Some examples of the categories constructed in this phase were 'establishing personal relevance', 'accepting emotions', 'exploring the opposite sex', 'renegotiating relational roles', and 'questioning the group'.

Theoretical coding, which comprises the third step of analysis, involves constructing the links between the categories and integrating them into a theoretical code which is analytic, explanatory and abstract. Theoretical codes aim to offer a coherent and comprehensive way of explicating the data set, to clearly define the basic processes, meanings and actions, and to demonstrate the interrelationships among them. In the present study, four main theoretical codes were constructed,

namely 'engaging in reflective practices', 'altering perspectives, changing norms', 'transforming actions', and 'resisting reflection'.

Memo-writing was practiced throughout all steps of the analysis. Memo-writing is considered as a pivotal aspect of the constructivist grounded theory, which helps to follow ideas, initiate a new a way of thinking about the data, ask questions and experiment with reporting and explaining significant concepts and processes (Charmaz, 2006). In the present analysis, memos were used to describe the patterns of processes each member goes through during and after the group, to examine the similarities and differences among them, to take note of the language and words the group members used to talk about their experiences and to define the boundaries of significant codes. Memos served as the basis for the reported results in this chapter. Visual means were also used to depict the relationships between categories and basic processes constructed during focused and theoretical coding.

CHAPTER 3

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

3.1 Data screening

Prior to the main statistical analysis, the data was entered to the Statistical Program

for Social Sciences (SPPS) Version 22 and checked for accuracy and missing values

by examining the frequencies as well as minimum and maximum values for each

column. The data of 7 participants (1 from the prevention group, 6 from the control

group) who did not answer some demographic questions were excluded. The data of

9 participants (7 from the prevention group, 2 from the control group) who dropped

out from the study were removed from the data set. After calculating the scores for

each variable, the data was examined for univariate outliers. In the control group, 16

participants who had extreme scores on more than three variables were excluded.

The other univariate outliers in the prevention and control groups were replaced by

the next highest score on the relevant variable, following the recommendations of

Field (2013) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). Visual inspection of histograms for

each variable revealed no problems with normality for behavioral measures which

assessed emotional approach coping and accommodative behavior during a fight

with a dating partner or close friend. On the other hand, the distributions of attitude

measures which targeted ambivalent sexism and acceptance of dating violence were

slightly positively skewed. Because the z values of skewness and kurtosis were

within the range of ± 2 which were defined as acceptable limits (Field, 2013), no data

transformation was applied and raw scores were used for later analysis. Visual

inspection of scatter plots for pretest and posttest scores on each variable revealed no

bivariate outliers. After initial data cleaning, there were 46 prevention and 74 control participants in the data set.

3.2 Descriptive measures

The present sample was composed of a total of 90 participants, 41 (% 46) of them being in the prevention group and 49 (% 54) in the control group. There were 24 (% 58) female and 17 (% 41) male participants in the prevention group, and 25 (% 51) female and 24 (% 49) male in the control group. The age range for the sample was 18-22 with a mean of 19.7 ($SD = 0.89$) for the total sample, 19.6 ($SD = 0.80$) for the prevention group, and 19.7 ($SD = 0.97$) for the control group. In terms of dating status, 22 participants both in the prevention (% 54) and control groups (% 45) had a dating partner at the start of the program. Among them, the average length of the dating relationship was 17.7 months ($SD = 13.8$) for the total sample, 15.4 months ($SD = 10.5$) for the prevention group and 20.1 months ($SD = 16.3$) for the control group, with a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 60 months. Chi square analyses showed that there was no significant difference between the prevention and control groups with regards to sex [$\chi^2(1) = 0.51$, $p > .05$] and dating status [$\chi^2(1) = 0.69$, $p > .05$]. The majority of the sample was heterosexual, with 7 (% 17) and 1 (% 2) participants identifying themselves as non-heterosexual in the prevention and control groups, respectively. A chi-square analysis demonstrated that the number of non-heterosexual participants was significantly higher in the prevention group than in the control group, $\chi^2(1) = 6.23$, $p < .05$. Table 2 presents the distribution of the total sample by group, sex, dating status and sexual orientation.

Table 2. The Distribution of the Total Sample by Group, Sex, Dating Status and Sexual Orientation

	Sex		Dating Status		Sexual Orientation		
	Male	Female	Yes	No	Hetero	Non-Hetero	**Total**
Prevention	17	24	22	19	34	7	41
Control	24	25	22	27	48	1	49
Total	41	49	44	46	82	8	90

Nearly one half of the sample (% 51) were born and lived in large cities like Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara before their college education, while the rest (% 49) came from smaller cities and towns in various regions of Turkey. A similar distribution was found in both the prevention and control groups, where 21 (% 52) and 24 (% 49) participants had an urban background, respectively. At the university, a majority of the participants had been studying at their 3rd (% 27, n = 24) or 4th (% 59, n = 53) academic term. The rest (% 12, n = 11) were in their 5th or 6th term, with 2 participants (% 2) studying at their programs for a longer period of time. A similar distribution was found, with a majority in the prevention (% 87, n = 36) and control groups (% 83, n = 41) being in the second year of their university life. Regarding the faculties the participants studied at, 19 (% 46), 11 (% 27) and 7 (% 17) in the prevention group were from the faculty of economics and administrative sciences, faculty of arts and sciences, and faculty of education, respectively. The number of participants in the control group studying at these faculties were 30 (% 61), 4 (% 8) and 12 (% 24). The faculty of engineering was underrepresented in the sample, with 4 (% 9) and 3 (% 6) participants in the prevention and control groups taking part in the study. Chi square analyses showed that there was no significant difference between prevention and control groups in terms of urban-rural background [χ^2 (1) = 0.11, $p > .05$], academic term [χ^2 (5) = 6.53, $p > .05$], and faculty [χ^2 (3) = 0.11, $p > .05$].

In terms of dating experiences, the majority of the total sample (% 77, n = 69) have had a dating relationship which lasted longer than 3 months. In the prevention and control groups, 34 (% 83) and 36 (% 71) participants have had such a dating relationship before. Among those who had prior experience with dating, a substantial majority had 1 or 2 partners, with 24 participants (% 71) in the prevention group and 29 participants (% 81) in the control group. The rest had 3-6 partners in their previous dating relationships. The average age at which the first romantic relationship started was 15 both in the prevention and control groups. Chi square analyses showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of previous dating experiences [χ^2 (1) = 1.65, p > .05] and the number of dating partners [χ^2 (2) = 1.39, p > .05].

Regarding dating violence, the frequency of behaviors perpetrated against a dating partner in the last year was on average 3.20 for the total sample (SD = 2.67), 3.61 for the prevention group (SD = 3.11) and 2.81 for the control group (SD = 2.11). Similarly, the frequency of violent acts experienced within the last year was 3.25 for the total sample (SD = 2.82), 3.80 for the prevention group (SD = 3.19) and 2.71 for the control group (SD = 2.31). An independent samples t-test revealed no significant differences between the prevention and the control group in the frequency of violent behaviors perpetrated [t(81) = -1.37, p > .05] and experienced [t(81) = -1.78, p > .05] in dating relationships in the previous year. Overall, the two groups were similar in most dimensions, constituting a young and predominantly heterosexual sample with relevant dating experiences and engagement with violence.

3.3 Pearson correlations

Pearson correlations were computed to examine the relationships among variables included in the present study and to inform later analyses in terms of selecting covariates for ANCOVAs on posttest scores. The descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study are presented in Table 3. The Pearson correlation coefficients among the set of variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum Values of the Scales Used in the Present Study

	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	SD	Min-Max	Mean	SD	Min-Max
EP	3.83	0.59	2.38-4.88	3.97	0.61	2.63-5
EE	3.59	0.79	1.63-5	3.62	0.75	1.63-5
Acc	6.45	1.05	3.73-8.82	6.39	1.07	3.64-8.27
ASI-host	2.61	1.09	1-5.27	2.47	1.07	1-5.09
ASI-ben	2.64	1.07	1-5.09	2.19	0.95	1-4.36
AMI-host	3.32	0.95	1.20-5.10	3.03	0.97	1-5
AMI-ben	2.28	0.99	1-5	2.04	0.82	1-4.56
Mpsy	1.72	0.49	1-2.80	1.62	0.47	1-2.80
Mphy	1.31	0.40	1-2.25	1.26	0.34	1-2.04
Fpsy	1.72	0.57	1-3.30	1.59	0.49	1-2.64
Fphy	1.61	0.63	1-3.30	1.42	0.49	1-2.77
SDS	1.49	1.41	0-5	-	-	-
Crisk	5.21	2.25	0-10	-	-	-
TFI	-	-	-	5.66	1.04	3.10-7

EP: Emotion Processing, EE: Emotion Expression, Acc: Accommodative Behavior, ASI-host: Ambivalent Sexism-Hostility, ASI-ben: Ambivalent Sexism-Benevolence, AMI-host: Ambivalence towards Men-Hostility, AMI-ben: Ambivalence towards Men-Benevolence, Mpsy: Attitude toward Dating Violence-Male Psychological Violence, Mphy: Attitude toward Dating Violence-Male Physical Violence, Fpsy: Attitude toward Dating Violence-Female Psychological Violence, Fphy: Attitude toward Dating Violence-Female Physical Violence, SDS: Social Desirability Scale, Crisk: Childhood Risk Factors for Violence; TFI: Therapeutic Factors Inventory

Regarding emotion processing and expression, the results showed moderate associations between pretest and posttest scores, and weak associations with some attitude measures. The correlation coefficient between emotion processing and expression were found to be .33 at pretest and .45 at posttest, indicating that the two were related, yet distinct processes. The pretest and posttest scores for emotion processing and expression were moderately associated, having correlation

coefficients of .46 and .51, respectively, suggesting that those processes were highly dependent on situational factors. The emotion processing and expression scores, particularly at posttest, showed a similar pattern of relationships with other variables. The results showed moderate positive correlations with accommodative behaviors, with correlation coefficients ranging from .23 to .49, and revealed low negative correlations with ambivalent attitudes towards men and women as well as acceptance of psychological violence, with correlation coefficients ranging from -.22 to -.32. Regarding accommodative behaviors, there was no evidence of significant correlations with most of the attitude measures. Overall, the results suggested that as the tendency to process and express emotions increased, the tendency to show accommodative behaviors also increased, and the acceptance of sexist beliefs and violent behaviors in dating relationships decreased.

An examination of correlations among attitude measures revealed that there were links between ambivalent sexism and the acceptance of violence. Regarding ambivalent sexism towards men and women, the results showed strong positive associations between pretest and posttest scores and a similar pattern of correlations with other attitude measures. Benevolent attitudes towards men and women were strongly and positively associated, with correlation coefficients ranging from .72 to .83, while there was a moderate correlation between hostility towards men and women, with correlation coefficients ranging from .39 to .47. Both at pretest and posttest, hostile and benevolent attitudes towards women were relatively strongly correlated, having coefficients ranging from .60 to .73, while there was a moderate correlation with regards to similar attitudes towards men, with coefficients with a range of .40-.57. The results suggested that benevolent attitudes towards men and

women were endorsed as a whole and that ambivalent sexism as a combination of hostility and benevolence was more uniform when the target group was women.

Regarding attitudes towards dating violence, pretest and posttest measures of male and female physical and psychological violence were relatively strongly correlated. Moderate-to-strong associations were obtained between attitudes towards men's and women's use of physical violence, with coefficients ranging from .50 to .68 as well as psychological violence, with coefficients ranging from .73 to .83. The correlations between physical and psychological forms of violence perpetrated by men and women were moderate or strong with coefficients from .39 to .67. They also had moderate correlations with measures of ambivalent sexism at both pretest and posttest assessments. The results suggested that the more the support for ambivalent sexism was, the more the acceptance towards physical and psychological dating violence was.

Social desirability score, the number of risk factors for violence in childhood, the number of violent behaviors perpetrated or experienced in the last year were planned to be included in later analyses as covariates. Social desirability, the first covariate, had low-to-moderate correlations with behavioral measures both at pretest and posttest assessments. Social desirability was weakly and positively associated with the pretest and posttest emotion processing score, $r = 27$ and $r = .26$, $ps < .05$, respectively. Similarly, the tendency to give socially appropriate responses had low-to-moderate positive correlations with the pretest and posttest accommodation score, $r = .53$, and $r = .32$, $ps < .01$, respectively. None of attitudinal measures had a significant correlation with social desirability, except attitudes towards male psychological violence. The results of the Pearson correlation test showed that the higher the social desirability score was, the lower the reported level of acceptance of

89

men's use of psychological violence in dating relationships at posttest, $r = -.223$, $p < .05$. The second potential covariate, the number of childhood risk factors for violence, was significantly and positively associated with a single measure, posttest attitude towards male physical violence, $r = .221$, $p < .05$. Regarding violence perpetration and victimization in the last year, none of the correlations with other variables in the present study were found to be significant, except showing a strong positive relationship with each other, $r = .81$, $p < .01$. On the basis of these results, social desirability and childhood risk factors were included as covariates in relevant ANCOVA models in the next step of analysis, while previous perpetration and victimization were excluded from further analysis.

The ratings of the quality of the group experience in the program, which were obtained at posttest, were found to have significant associations with some variables measured at pretest. The results of the Pearson correlation showed that the more frequently one expressed emotions in a relational conflict prior to the program, the more positive one's experience in the program was, $r = .35$, $p < .05$. The quality of the group experience was negatively associated with pretest attitudes towards male and female psychological violence, $r = -.39$ and $r = -.35$, $ps < .05$, respectively, suggesting that less accepting attitudes towards psychological violence were linked to a more positive experience in the program. Because the quality of the group experience was not associated with any of the posttest scores on the measured variables, no further analyses were conducted.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the Measures Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Pr-EP	1																				
2. Pt-EP	.46*	1																			
3. Pr-EE	.33*	.46*	1																		
4. Pt-EE	.28*	.45*	.51*	1																	
5. Pr-Acc	.37*	.23*	.29*	.28*	1																
6. Pt-Acc		.49*		.40*	.42*	1															
7. Pr-ASI-host		-.23[t]					1														
8. Pt-ASI-host		-.23[t]					.88*	1													
9. Pr-ASI-ben		-.25[t]	-.28*				.73*	.60*	1												
10. Pt-ASI-ben			-.22[t]				.66*	.63*	.83*	1											
11. Pr-AMI-host					-.22[t]		.47*	.39*	.59*	.55*	1										
12. Pt-AMI-host							.44*	.46*	.53*	.61*	.72*	1									
13. Pr-AMI-ben		-.25[t]	-.29*	-.23[t]			.82*	.74*	.81*	.75*	.42*	.40*	1								
14. Pt-AMI-ben		-.24[t]	-.25[t]	-.22[t]			.73*	.75*	.72*	.83*	.45*	.57*	.85*	1							
15. Pr-Mpsy	-.23[t]			-.31*			.53*	.51*	.41*	.44*			.62*	.55*	1						
16. Pt-Mpsy		-.27*		-.32*			.53*	.52*	.35*	.40*			.55*	.52*	.82*	1					
17. Pr-Mphy							.42*	.41*	.41*	.49*	.26[t]		.47*	.42*	.50*	.42*	1				
18. Pt-Mphy							.34*	.30*	.25*	.37*			.27[t]	.32*	.45*	.54*	.67*	1			
19. Pr-Fpsy	-.23[t]	-.22[t]	-.22[t]	-.23[t]			.50*	.48*	.41*	.44*	.28*		.52*	.43*	.83*	.75*	.52*	.48*	1		
20. Pt-Fpsy				-.29*			.41*	.45*	.34*	.44*	.26[t]	.33*	.43*	.49*	.73*	.81*	.38*	.53*	.74*	1	
21. Pr-Fphy							.48*	.38*	.43*	.40*	.28*		.48*	.32*	.54*	.59*	.68*	.52*	.65*	.46*	1
22. Pt-Fphy							.39*	.36*	.23[t]	.32*		.25[t]	.29*	.31*	.39*	.55*	.50*	.67*	.47*	.51*	.68*

Pr-EP: Pretest emotion processing, Pt-EP: Posttest emotion processing, Pr-EE: Pretest emotion expression, Pt-EE: Posttest emotion expression, Pr-Acc: Pretest accommodative behavior, Pt-Acc: Posttest accommodative behavior, Pr-ASI-host: Pretest ambivalent sexism-hostility, Pt-ASI-host: Posttest ambivalent sexism-hostility, Pr-ASI-ben: Pretest ambivalent sexism-benevolence, Pt-ASI-ben: Posttest ambivalent sexism-benevolence, Pr-AMI-host: Pretest ambivalence towards men-hostility, Pt-AMI-host: Posttest ambivalence towards men-hostility, Pr-AMI-ben: Posttest ambivalence towards men-benevolence, Pt-AMI-ben: Posttest ambivalence towards men-benevolence, Pr-Mpsy: Pretest attitude toward dating violence-male psychological violence, Pt-Mpsy: Posttest attitude toward dating violence-male psychological violence, Pr-Mphy: Pretest attitude towards dating violence-male physical violence, Pt-Mphy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence-male physical violence, Pr-Fpsy: Pretest attitude towards dating violence-female psychological violence, Pt-Fpsy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence-female psychological violence, Pr-Fphy: Pretest attitude towards dating violence-female physical violence, Pt-Fphy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence-female physical violence.
[t]p<.05, *p<.01

3.4 The effect of the program on emotional approach coping

The first hypothesis in the present study was that the prevention group would engage in emotional approach coping more frequently during a relational conflict with a dating partner or close friend after the implementation of the program as compared to the control group. Emotional approach coping was measured by two scales, namely emotional processing (EP) and emotional expression (EE). Because the two scales measured related, yet distinct processes (Stanton et al., 2000), a univariate approach was adopted to investigate the impact of the program on each of them. The participants' sex and dating status at the start of the program were also included in the model to explore any possible interaction effects.

A 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA was conducted to determine the effect of the group, sex and dating status on posttest EP scores while controlling for pretest EP. The analysis revealed no significant main effects for the group [$F(1, 81) = 2.16, p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 81) = 3.06, p > .05$], and dating status [$F(1, 81) = 0.19, p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant. The covariate, pretest EP, was significantly related to posttest EP, $F(1, 81) = 24.37, p < .0001$, *partial η^2* = .23. The adjusted means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5. Another 3-way ANCOVA was conducted to investigate the effect of the group, sex and dating status on posttest EE scores while controlling for pretest EE and social desirability. Social desirability was included in the model as a covariate, since it had low, yet significant correlations with the pretest and the posttest EE score. The findings were similar to those of emotion processing and showed insignificant main effects for the group [$F(1, 80) = 2.60, p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 80) = 1.18, p > .05$], and dating status [$F(1, 80) = 0.74, p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant. The results also indicated a significant association between the covariate, pretest EE, and the posttest EE, $F(1, 80) = 17.32$,

$p < .0001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .18$, while social desirability was not a significant covariate,

$F(1, 80) = 0.77$, $p > .05$. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5. Overall,

the results provided no support for the first hypothesis and showed no evidence of

improvement in emotion processing and emotion expression during a conflict after

participating in the group, controlling for prior emotion approach coping.

Table 5. Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for Posttest Emotion Processing,
Emotion Expression and Accommodative Behavior Scores by Group, Sex and Dating
Status

| | Dating Partner | | | | No Dating Partner | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | |
Pt-EP	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
Prevention	3.81	0.48	4.24	0.61	3.89	0.76	4.17	0.28	1-5
Control	3.72	0.47	3.89	0.66	3.93	0.54	3.86	0.72	1-5
Pt-EE									
Prevention	3.70	0.84	3.77	0.81	3.62	0.98	3.86	0.20	1-5
Control	3.23	0.59	3.64	0.54	3.56	0.68	3.53	0.84	1-5
Pt-Acc									
Prevention	6.64	0.84	6.88	1.03	6.27	1.35	6.60	0.58	1-9
Control	6.14	0.88	6.39	1.43	6.19	0.57	5.93	1.05	1-9

Pt-EP: Posttest emotion processing, Pt-EE: Posttest emotion expression, Pt-Acc: Posttest accommodative
behavior

3.5 The effect of the program on accommodative behavior

The second hypothesis in the present study was that the participants in the prevention

group would manifest more accommodative behavior during an argument than the

controls, regardless of their individual differences in such behaviors prior to the

program. The variable of accommodative behavior was measured by a composite

score which included constructive and active responses in the face of a relational

conflict, because Rusbult and colleagues (1991) recommended the use of an overall

average score as an alternative to using subscales and the alpha coefficients for some

subscales in the present study were lower than acceptable. A univariate approach was

taken to analyze the impact of group, as well as sex and dating status, on accommodative behavior following the implementation of the program.

A 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA was conducted to investigate the impact of the group, sex and dating status on the posttest accommodation score whilst controlling for the pretest score on the same measure and social desirability. Social desirability was included in the model as a covariate because of its low-to-moderate correlation with the pretest and the posttest accommodation score. The analysis showed that no significant main effects for the group [$F(1, 80) = 3.71, p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 80) = 0.35, p > .05$], and dating status [$F(1, 80) = 1.34, p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant. The pretest accommodation score was a significant covariate, $F(1, 80) = 7.06, p < .05, partial \eta^2 = .08$, while social desirability was not, $F(1, 80) = 1.13, p > .05$. The adjusted means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5. The results failed to provide support for the second hypothesis and evidenced no significant difference in accommodation behaviors between prevention and control groups after the implementation of the program, controlling for their prior accommodative behaviors.

3.6 The effect of the program on ambivalent sexism

The third hypothesis was that participation in the program was expected to decrease ambivalent sexism towards women. Ambivalent sexism was measured by two subscales, namely hostile and benevolent sexism. Because these two types of sexism were proposed to be distinct, yet related constructs (Glick et al., 2000; Sakallı-Ugurlu, 2002), a univariate approach was adopted to investigate the impact of participation in the program on hostile and benevolent sexism after the

implementation of the program, controlling for differences in sexist attitudes prior to the program. Regarding hostile sexism, a 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA revealed a main effect of the group, F(1, 81) = 7.11, p < .01, *partial η²* = .08. Pairwise comparisons with the Bonferroni correction showed that the prevention group (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = 0.08) reported less hostile attitudes towards women than the control group (*M* = 2.61, *SD* = 0.07) following the program. The main effects were insignificant for sex [*F*(1, 81) = 0.82, *p* > .05] and dating status [*F*(1, 81) = 1.12, *p* > .05]. The analysis showed that the pretest hostile sexism score was a significant covariate, *F*(1, 81) = 245.29, *p* < .01, *partial η²* = .75. None of the interactions were significant.

Regarding benevolent sexism, a similar 3-way ANCOVA was conducted. The results showed that the main effects were not significant for the group [*F*(1, 81) = 3.49, *p* > .05], sex [*F*(1, 81) = 0.07, *p* > .05] and dating status [*F*(1, 81) = 0.94, *p* > .05]. Similar to hostile sexism, the analysis showed that the pretest benevolent sexism score was a significant covariate, *F*(1, 81) = 177.16, *p* < .01, *partial η²* = .69. None of the interactions were significant. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6. Overall, the results provided partial support for the third hypothesis and indicated that the prevention group had less hostile attitudes towards women than the controls, controlling for the differences in ambivalent sexism prior to the program. However, there was no evidence of difference between prevention and control groups in benevolent sexism against women.

Table 6. Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for Posttest Hostile and Benevolent Sexism Scores by Group, Sex and Dating status

| | Dating Partner | | | | No Dating Partner | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | |
Pt-ASI-host	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	Range
Prevention	2.36	1.07	2.34	1.09	2.24	1.04	2.26	0.94	1-6
Control	2.79	0.81	2.58	1.08	2.66	0.99	2.43	0.86	1-6
Pt-ASI-ben									
Prevention	2.0	1.05	2.05	0.94	2.24	1.11	1.19	0.50	1-6
Control	2.16	0.69	2.21	0.87	2.32	0.96	2.42	1.04	1-6

Pt-ASI-host: Posttest ambivalent sexism-hostility, Pt-ASI-ben: Posttest ambivalent sexism inventory-benevolence

3.7 The effect of the program on ambivalent attitudes towards men

The fourth hypothesis was that participation in the program would reduce ambivalent attitudes towards men, controlling for individual differences in such attitudes prior to the program. Similar to ambivalent sexism, ambivalence towards men was measured by two subscales, namely hostile and benevolent attitudes, and a univariate approach was adopted to test the present hypothesis, because they were considered as related, yet separate constructs (Glicke & Fiske, 1999; Sakallı-Ugurlu, 2008). Regarding hostile attitudes towards men, a 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA showed that the main effects were not significant for group [$F(1, 81) = 2.15$, $p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 81) = 1.0$, $p > .05$], and dating status [$F(1, 81) = 0.44$, $p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant, except the interaction between sex and romantic status, $F(1, 81) = 7.16$, $p < .01$, *partial η^2* = .08. To examine this interaction, a series of t tests was conducted which showed that among those who had a dating partner at the start of the program, women ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.12$) reported higher hostility towards men at the posttest as compared to men ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 0.19$), $t(42) = -2.84$, $p < .05$. . The covariate, pretest hostility towards men, was found to be significant, $F(1, 81) = 87.86$, $p < .001$, *partial η^2* = .52.

Regarding benevolent attitudes towards men, a 3-way ANCOVA revealed no significant main effect for group [$F(1, 81) = 3.43$, $p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 81) = 0.64$, $p > .05$] and dating status [$F(1, 81) = 0.44$, $p > .05$]. Pretest benevolence towards men was found to be a significant covariate, $F(1, 81) = 164.37$, $p < .01$, *partial $\eta^2 = .67$*. The adjusted means and standard deviations are presented in Table 7. Overall, the results provided no support for the fourth hypothesis and indicated that there were no differences between the prevention and control groups in terms of holding ambivalent attitudes towards men following the program, controlling for prior attitudes.

Table 7. Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for Posttest Hostile and Benevolent Attitudes towards Men Scores by Group, Sex and Dating Status

| | Dating Partner | | | | No Dating Partner | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | |
Pt-AMI-host	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
Prevention	2.60	0.99	3.08	1.16	2.90	0.86	2.71	1.13	1-6
Control	2.61	0.74	3.26	0.57	3.33	0.86	3.01	1.16	1-6
Pt-AMI-ben									
Prevention	1.82	0.58	1.99	0.87	1.87	0.80	1.93	0.39	1-6
Control	1.89	0.43	2.15	0.59	2.24	0.91	2.08	0.73	1-6

Pt-AMI-host: Posttest ambivalence towards men-hostility, Pt-AMI-ben: Posttest ambivalence towards men-benevolence

3.8 The effect of the program on attitudes towards dating violence

The fifth hypothesis was that participation in the program would decrease accepting attitudes towards dating violence. These attitudes were measured by four scales, namely male physical violence, female physical violence, male psychological violence and female psychological violence. Because each scale was constructed to measure attitudes towards a particular form of violence in a particular context (Price et al., 1999), a univariate approach was adopted and four separate ANCOVAs were conducted to test the impact of group, as well as sex and dating status, on attitudes

towards dating violence, controlling for relevant pretest measures, and social desirability and childhood risk factors when significant associations were found with the variables included in the models. All adjusted means and standard deviations are presented in Table 8. Regarding attitudes towards male physical violence, a 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA revealed a significant main effect for group, $F(1, 79) = 4.64$, $p < .05$, *partial η^2* = .05. A pairwise comparison with the Bonferroni correction showed that the prevention group ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 0.05$) had less accepting attitudes towards male physical violence in dating relationships than the control group ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 0.04$). The main effects were not significant for sex [$F(1, 79) = 0.01$, $p > .05$] and dating status [$F(1, 79) = 0.19$, $p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant. Pretest attitudes towards men's use of physical violence was a significant covariate, $F(1, 79) = 58.58$, $p < .01$, *partial η^2* = .43, as well as childhood risk factors violence, $F(1, 79) = 5.71$, $p < .05$, *partial η^2* = .07. Regarding attitudes towards women's use of physical violence, a 3-way ANCOVA showed a significant main effect of the group, $F(1, 80) = 3.99$, $p < .05$, *partial η^2* = .05. A pairwise comparison with the Bonferroni correction revealed that the control group ($M = 1.49$, $SD = 0.05$) was more accepting of women's use of physical violence towards their male partners as compared to the prevention group ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 0.07$) following the implementation of the program. The main effects were not significant for sex [$F(1, 80) = 0.01$, $p > .05$] and dating status [$F(1, 80) = 0.38$, $p > .05$]. All of the interactions were insignificant. The covariate, pretest attitude towards female physical violence, was found to be significant, $F(1, 80) = 74.19$, $p < .01$, *partial η^2* = .48.

Regarding attitudes towards male psychological violence, a 2 x 2 x 2 ANCOVA revealed an insignificant effect for the group [$F(1, 79) = 2.48$, $p > .05$],

sex [$F(1, 79) = 1.22$, $p > .05$], and dating status [$F(1, 79) = 1.35$, $p > .05$]. None of the interactions were significant. The pretest attitude towards male psychological violence was a significant covariate, $F(1, 79) = 134.55$, $p < .01$, *partial η^2 = .63*, while social desirability was not, $F(1, 79) = 0.63$, $p > .05$. In a similar vein, a 3-way ANCOVA on posttest attitudes towards female psychological violence yielded no significant main effects for group [$F(1, 80) = 0.73$, $p > .05$], sex [$F(1, 80) = 0.22$, $p > .05$], dating status [$F(1, 80) = 0.32$, $p > .05$] and interactions. The covariate, pretest attitudes towards women's use of psychological violence, was significant, $F(1, 80) = 80.65$, $p < .01$, *partial η^2 = .50*. Overall, the results provided partial support for the fifth hypothesis and showed that participation in the program was associated with a reduction in acceptance of physical violence, while not influencing attitudes towards psychological violence, controlling for attitudes prior to the implementation.

Table 8. Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for Posttest Attitudes towards Dating Violence Scores by Group, Sex and Dating Status

| | Dating Partner | | | | No Dating Partner | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | |
Pt-ADV-Mphy	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
Prevention	1.19	0.33	1.21	0.29	1.21	0.37	1.16	0.06	1-5
Control	1.32	0.27	1.27	0.27	1.30	0.45	1.29	0.34	1-5
Pt-ADV-Fphy									
Prevention	1.29	0.47	1.38	0.46	1.23	0.48	1.35	0.60	1-5
Control	1.53	0.49	1.49	0.51	1.53	0.61	1.38	0.34	1-5
Pt-ADV-Mpsy									
Prevention	1.62	0.27	1.53	0.43	1.53	0.50	1.59	0.43	1-5
Control	1.86	0.61	1.64	0.29	1.66	0.47	1.55	0.39	1-5
Pt-ADV-Fpsy									
Prevention	1.46	0.43	1.52	0.44	1.68	0.53	1.48	0.51	1-5
Control	1.58	0.45	1.63	0.41	1.64	0.54	1.57	0.51	1-5

Pt-ADV-Mphy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence-male physical violence, Pt-ADV-Fphy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence- female physical violence, Pt-ADV-Mpsy: Posttest attitude toward dating violence-male psychological violence, Pt-ADV-Fpsy: Posttest attitude towards dating violence-female psychological violence

CHAPTER 4

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The present analysis revealed two patterns, one demonstrating how a process of transformation took place, and the other exemplifying processes of resistance and ambivalence with respect to change. These two patterns were constructed through a reading and re-reading of the overall accounts and reflected the general flow of the narratives as well as the researcher's observations of the group members' attitudes and standpoints as they were enacted in relation to her during the interview. The analysis of these two patterns demonstrated the operation of four main processes, namely engaging in reflective practices, altering perspectives and changing norms, transforming actions and, resisting reflection and expressing ambivalence. These processes triggered, reinforced, accelerated or intertwined with each other, rather than working separately. The two patterns brought a selection of these four processes together, and integrated them into a rich and complex whole, resulting in a coherent narrative in the first pattern and creating an inconsistent and ambivalent one in the second. The two patterns and the processes involved are explained below.

4.1 The pattern of transformation

The pattern of transformation was evident in the accounts of approximately two thirds of the group members. The majority of them were young women. The members in this pattern presented a coherent narrative and clear examples of transformation. In their accounts, the interrelated processes of engaging in reflective practices, altering perspectives and changing norms, and transforming actions were

predominant, while there were very few references to the process of resisting

reflection and expressing ambivalence. The three processes operated together to

increase one's agency, enhance one's sense of responsibility and support one's self-

confidence.

In this pattern, the group was experienced as empowering, supportive and

informative. The extent to which one's life and relationships were transformed

showed some variance. Some group members reported an overarching change in

their relationships, while others shared transformations in specific domains. Figure 1

identifies the components of each process. These components come from an overall

analysis of all accounts. Thus, a single individual does not manifest every single

component presented in the figure. However, every group member describes similar

steps and processes of change, and shows the same temporal relationship among

them. The three processes and their components are explained separately below.

4.1.1 Engaging in reflective practices

Reflective practices arose from interactions in the group which stimulated thinking,

questioning and making observations, an open-minded and flexible attitude, and a

willingness to improve self. Reflective practices were those active processes which

involved exploring, observing and asking questions about the self, and brought along

different ways of feeling and thinking about them. Keeping the focus on self, such

practices created a mode of reflection, observation and inquiry, increasing attention

to one's internal world and leading to various insights, particularly for those who

aimed to understand and improve themselves and their relationships in the group.

Reflective practices engaged with the past in an attempt to make sense of previous

behaviors, feelings and thoughts, and to utilize this knowledge. They indicated an intentional, active, directed effort. The group provided a fertile space for their emergence by opening up personally meaningful issues in discussions, posing questions, inviting experimentation with different means of self-expression, encouraging self-observation and supplying a rich source of learning through others' experiences. Taking self as an object of observation and inquiry in the company of others led to increased self-awareness, opened up new avenues for improvement and growth, and offered new learning experiences. Reflective practices played a vital role in transforming the group into a purposeful and influential process.

Reflective practices were set in motion by an interactive setting where one felt secure, comfortable and attached. Such a sense of comfort and belongingness began to flourish as group members got to know each other, had fun together in the group and enjoyed sharing their time. The resulting feeling of coherence and unity fostered a more open attitude, increasing the relevance and the meaning of the group for members, supporting their commitment and motivating them to engage in a reciprocal exchange of ideas and to learn from others. This experience prepared the groundwork necessary for focusing on reflection, awareness and growth of the self, and laid the foundation for open, reflective thinking and observation. As one started to feel emotionally safe and began to value the confidential, non-judgmental and exploratory atmosphere of the group, the easier it got to open one's mind to new ways of thinking and questioning oneself.

The following sections present the reflective practices used by the group members and explain how they facilitated transformation.
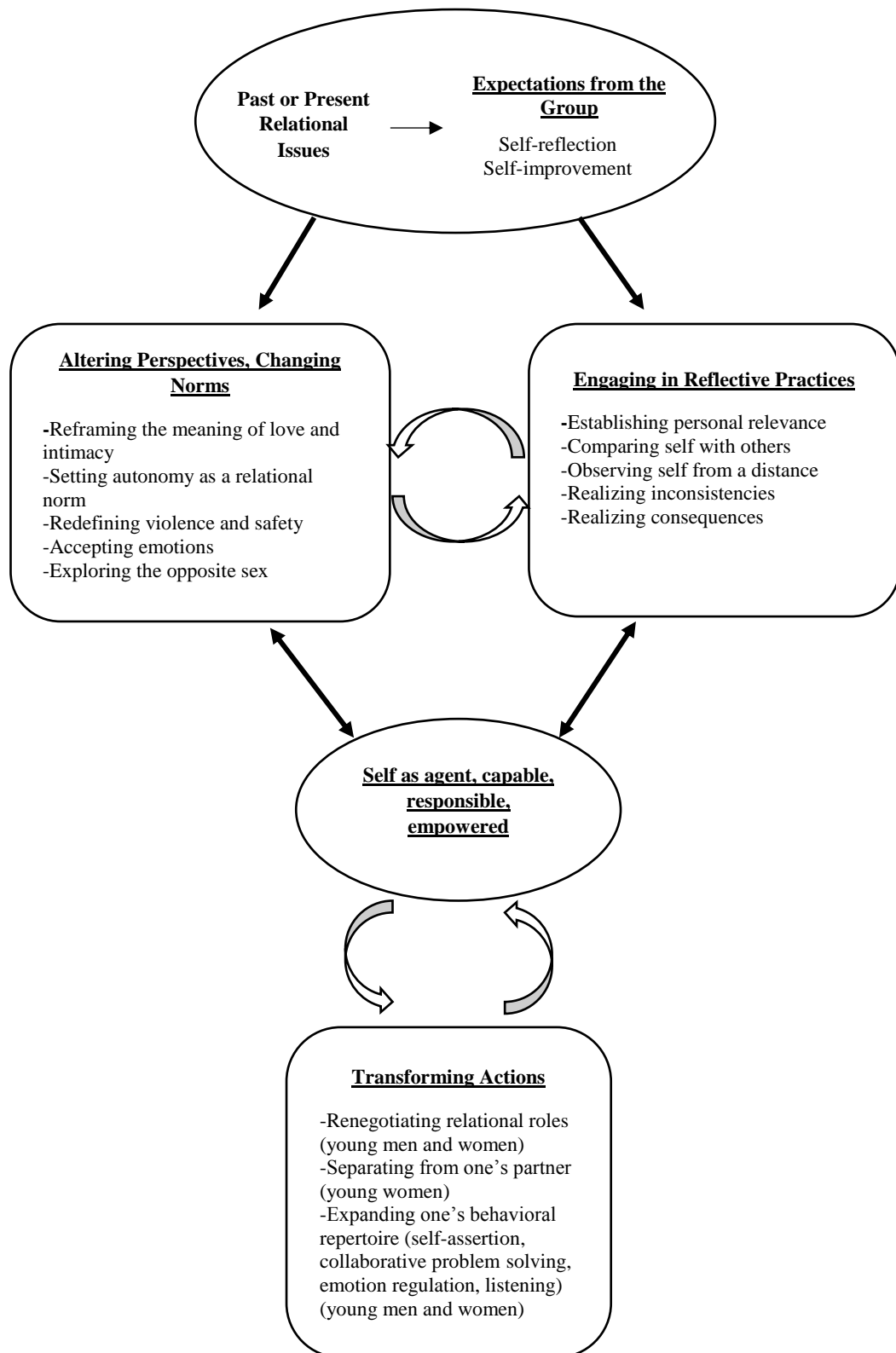
Figure 1. The processes of transformation towards equality and safety in dating relationships following the program

Establishing personal relevance

Reflective practices initiated an active process of engagement with the self and facilitated the creation of personally meaningful experiences throughout the group. The first step in this process was establishing the links between real life stories and group topics, a practice which enabled group members to make focused self-observations, deepened the exploration of roles and patterns, increased their sense of involvement with and commitment to the group, and reinforced a view of the group as a place of understanding and contemplation. Such links were formed as a result of a deliberate attempt to scrutinize their individual experiences in present or past relationships, to observe friendships and couples, and to utilize the interactive processes or shared accounts in the group with the aim of digesting the group content and infusing it with meaning. Some members described the group topics like jealousy, control, personal space as "a part of our daily life", "things that keep us busy all the time", "down-to-earth" and "things that confuse us in our lives", and expressed their curiosity about them.

Finding and analyzing examples from one's own life or that of others turned abstract concepts like safety, autonomy and power into identifiable and concrete actions, which made them more comprehensible and provided a basis for intentional and directed reflection. This process facilitated the formation of a sense of familiarity with the group and personalized it, particularly for those who had relevant experiences in their romantic relationships. Such a sense of familiarity with the topics rendered the group more realistic and less superficial, motivated the group members to become more engaged and increased the willingness to learn new ideas and perspectives. Because of that, linking the group with daily life and previous experiences served as the first and foremost reflective practice which prepared the

ground for further exploration, questioning and observation. One young man explained his way of engagement with the group which proved to be beneficial to him:

> "When someone said something here, my version of a similar event crossed my mind immediately. [I thought] What did I do? How did I act? In fact I was in a process of thinking all the time. I think we should always evaluate events in our daily lives in this way; if you don't have such experiences, others' lives." (Group3-02) (Appendix M, 1)

The interactive processes in the group planted the seeds of reflective practices which transformed some group members' understanding of self and increased self-awareness. With each new topic introduced and discussed in the group, most group members in this pattern were encouraged to reflect on relational issues they had not given a thought to before, such as anger control, autonomy, jealousy and boundaries, and to answer the question of where they stood with regards to these issues. In response to this probe, turning to self, personal history or current relationships and making detailed observations about group topics emerged as common practices. The group, both stimulating and creating a space for reflection, offered a unique opportunity not found in daily life to observe and question self, and to learn about the personal experiences of other people.

One feature of the group which facilitated such reflection was its continuity over a period of time, posing new questions or reiterating old ones each week. For some, this process of questioning and contemplation induced a different way of seeing oneself, as they started to become aware of and to identify what they desired and valued in a relationship. Some group members depicted the group process as "thought provoking", "challenging" and "a space for understanding", orienting them to reflect on the roles they assumed and the behaviors they showed in their present or

past relationships. One young man explained his reflective engagement about the past by stating that "(During the group) I thought about what I did or what my partner did all the time. I examined the relationship more than I did when we were together. I wasn't thinking that much back then. I did it here as if I was in a relationship" (Group3-02) (Appendix M, 2). One young woman also shared how her questioning attitude was beneficial to her:

> There were some aspects (of the group) which made me face the fact that one is worthy on her own … There were some parts (of the group) that made me say to myself 'become aware of yourself and see what you are doing'. I think this helped me both to take a lesson from the past and also to know myself. (Group0-04) (Appendix M, 3)

Comparing self with others

Exploring self and comparing one's characteristics, choices and decisions with others fed into reflective processes and opened new avenues for self-awareness. Simultaneously discovering oneself and observing others as they expressed themselves in the group mobilized a process of comparison and examination. Some group members mentioned that nonverbal activities like visualization, drawing, creating sculptures provided rich opportunities for experimenting with different modes of self-expression. When they engaged in interpreting the meaning of end products, received feedback about how they were perceived and compared them with that of others, it helped them to observe themselves and to gain new insights. An awareness of one's difference from other members, who turned out to represent reference points, motivated one to reevaluate self. One young woman shared how she started to question her personal boundaries following her realization of their permeability and transparency in a drawing activity, and continued to reflect on this

issue later. Similarly, another young woman explained her comparative evaluation of her boundaries in a drawing activity and the resulting awareness:

> The activity that affected me most was the one in which we closed our eyes, visualized our boundaries. We drew them. That was the activity that made me think and challenged me most. Because my boundaries were like a pale fence. It was possible to pass the mat every point. I compared myself with other people. Realizing how permeable, how flexible mine were was a bit unsettling. (Group2-02) (Appendix M, 4)

Observing self from a distance

Reflective practices were put in motion in an interactive and calm setting where one could assume a distant attitude towards the self and make observations. Temporarily severing the connection between one's behaviors and self and treating them as if they belonged to someone else created a sense of openness and reinforced a questioning and reflective frame of mind. Such a feeling of temporary detachment was created in two ways. Firstly, performing role plays probed reflection and created the opportunity to observe self from a distance. Some group members examined how they reacted to a given role and how comfortable they felt in it, and tried to observe the type of reactions they got from role play partners in response to their behaviors. The inherent as if quality of role plays enabled them to receive feedback for those behaviors they usually exhibited, to experience a situation in opposite roles and to observe it from two different perspectives. Such practices cultivated a clearer understanding of the meaning of their own actions and motivations as well as those of their partner, and facilitated a more objective evaluation about the extent to which their behaviors were safe or unsafe. This reflective practice emerged in a role-play context where they felt detached from themselves and felt emotions which were less

strong than what they would experience in an actual argument with a romantic partner.

A similar sense of detachment came to the fore when one heard one's own opinions being shared and expressed by another group member and curiously paid attention to the comments and feedback such opinions received. When these views and ideas were temporarily considered as belonging to someone else, there was more space for reflection and less defensiveness. A couple of group members used expressions and metaphors such as "alienating oneself from one's problems", "looking at oneself in the mirror", "seeing oneself through others' eyes" to describe this process of detachment and the resulting sense of openness and self-awareness. The following two quotes exemplified how two young men benefited from comparing their behaviors in real life with role plays which granted a sense of disconnection from strong emotions:

> I found role plays beneficial, because when you take them seriously, talking to someone who is not your partner makes you more sensible. When you talk sensibly, you realize the difference with what you did before … You don't get emotional, because you have no reason to get emotional. (Group5-06) (Appendix M, 5)

> You don't think about your partner's reactions when you are in a relationship. There is adrenalin; in a fight, you don't think. But here in various dialogues you make, when you play your role knowing that the other is your friend, you can reflect on her behaviors more. You can think that a sensible decision might come up, I am acting like a child during a fight, when I am jealous I act like a child, maybe I can change. But in normal relationships, this is very hard to accept, because what counts is being right, it's not about finding the right thing to do. In such fights, there is this situation that one wants to dominate the other and be right. I learned about this issue more easily here. (Group0-09) (Appendix M, 6)

Realizing inconsistencies

Reflective practices drew upon a discourse on a theory-practice dichotomy and revealed inconsistencies in self. As group members started to reflect on the group topics and observed themselves, they became more aware of the conflicts and discrepancies between their beliefs and actions. Such awareness developed when they compared the opinions they held and expressed in the group with their actual behaviors in present or previous relationships. One young woman explained this process by stating that "The group made me question myself. What am I doing? What I am saying? To what extent do my behaviors reflect it?'" (Group2-02) (Appendix M, 7). Noting the difference between adhering to an abstract value such as equality and practicing it in daily life, some group members felt encouraged and motivated to close this gap.

A similar process of questioning became evident when some group members started to realize the disparity between the way they expected to be treated by their partner and the way they treated him or her. Such awareness evoked a sense of responsibility and a willingness to change, and brought up an ethics of reciprocity and fairness to be followed in romantic, intimate relationships. Becoming aware of conflicts, inconsistencies and discrepancies in self provided food for thought, invited further reflection and altered some group members' view of self to position it as more responsible and committed to a notion of mutuality. One young man shared how he moved towards exhibiting consistency between expectations and actions, stating that "Everyone wants to be treated nicely, but people may not be successful when they try to practice it. The group helped me in this regard. I try to show behaviors that I expect to see" (Group2-09) (Appendix M, 8). In a similar vein, a

young woman explained how her increased awareness of the discrepancy between her beliefs and actions challenged her to change the way she treated her partner:

> When we talk about a problem here or the template of an argument that has not happened, I say 'no, definitely this is not supposed to go like this'. But later, when I reflect on it by myself, I realize that I've done it before. I realize that I've been doing things that I believe should not be done for a long time and I'm even not aware of it … I wasn't thinking; if I was angry with something, I used to express it immediately, and then I used to apologize. This happened many times. In fact, there are no excuses. If he does the same thing, I would be very sad … In this respect, I changed a lot. (Group3-12) (Appendix M, 9)

Realizing the consequences of one's actions

Engaging in reflective practices encouraged a confrontation with self and involved an exploration of the consequences of one's actions. Examining the impact of one's behaviors on others, relationships and oneself emerged as a common reflective practice which increased self-awareness, evoked a sense of responsibility and agency, and mobilized the willingness to act differently in future encounters. Such examination was facilitated by an exchange of experiences in the group where members shared personal stories, real and specific examples about how they felt when their partners treated them in a certain way, which provided a learning opportunity for all and raised questions about one's own actions.

The group members engaged in a similar reflection in role play activities where they could try out some behaviors and observed their impact, as they received feedback from others. Those activities and exchanges drove them to think about the consequences of their own courses of action in their current lives or in the past, and to show some interest in the other's feelings and reactions instead of making

assumptions. Although some group members reported a sense of regret and disappointment as a result of such reflection at times, it played an essential role in creating a personally meaningful narrative of relational experiences. Some group members mentioned realizing that the behaviors they manifested initiated a cycle of reactivity and tension, escalated a conflict, caused avoidance and emotional cut-off, and risked ending the relationship while leaving oneself alone to cope with a wide array of unsettling feelings and emotional burden.

Some group members reported that they accepted their "mistakes" after realizing their lack of interest in the other or the potentially harmful impact of their previous behaviors, and expressed their feeling of responsibility to change. One young woman shared that "I've realized that I focus on the things that I want, I want this or that, but I don't think about what it means for the other person, its impact on the other"(Group 3-12) (Appendix M, 10). Exploring and becoming aware of the consequences of their actions challenged the habit of acting without thinking and giving no thought to the impact they might have on others. The following two quotes demonstrated how two young women learned to reflect on the impact of their behaviors as a result of the group experience:

> In an argument, I used to talk to feel relieved without paying attention to the other's feelings … Here there was this friend, she said that she feels offended when her boyfriend calls her an idiot. I talk like this very often … Now I see that even a small word might really be offensive, even though he knows that I don't really mean it. I used to think that he was exaggerating and that he was not really sad or hurt. (Group5-03) (Appendix M, 11)

> My behaviors were written on the board and then we talked about
> how this behavior would make the other person feel. When I reflect
> on the other's feelings so vividly by discussing them and when I
> think 'yes, I would feel the same, if I were you', I feel bad. If I do
> this, the other might feel this and that. Why would I continue to
> behave in the same way if I know all this? (Group5-12) (Appendix
> M, 12)

All in all, reflective practices took the self as an object of inquiry and observation,

invited a novel of way of thinking about its nature and its impact, and increased self-

awareness.

4.1.2 Altering perspectives, changing norms

Broadening perspectives and adopting a new way of thinking about relationships

emerged from an open exchange of ideas and discovery of diverse opinions. Altered

perspectives indicated a transformation in how the group members interpreted and

created meaning out of relationships and their partner's behaviors, and what they

deemed as significant in romantic involvements. As the way they read love,

intimacy, autonomy and violence changed, the definition of a normal and acceptable

behavior in dating was reevaluated and revised, and new relational norms were set.

Developing an alternative framework for meaning making and learning a new

language to talk about relational problems, expectations and disappointments

necessitated challenging deeply seated and highly influential normative discourses

about love, intimacy and gender. This challenge turned out to be effective in altering

perspectives, when the group members engaged in a collective process of reflection

on alternatives, and shared their experiences and opinions about how relationships

were supposed to work. Learning what peers approved or disapproved of played an

essential role in adopting a new perspective or consolidating a previously held belief. A sense of being affirmed by the group and an exploration of common and shared experiences facilitated altering frameworks by supporting alternative norms, providing emotional support and decreasing a sense of isolation. Mostly, such a change laid the groundwork for behavioral change and served as a precursor of transforming actions.

Altered perspectives involved a reexamination of previous preconceptions and assumptions about the opposite sex and the adoption of a new approach based on an understanding of similarities between sexes. Establishing direct contact with the other, who was constructed as the unfamiliar and the different, provided an opportunity to explore their way of thinking and to engage in a transformative discussion and an open exchange of ideas. This interactive process enabled reshaping the overemphasis on sex differences and prevented further polarization. Such contact which challenged the group members by presenting diverse opinions, counterarguments and explanations provided an intriguing alternative socialization experience and planted the seeds of an effort to recognize and understand the other.

The following sections present the alterations the group members experienced with regards to their perspectives in dating and intimate relationships, and the vital role they played in facilitating transforming actions.

Reframing the meaning of love and intimacy

Perspectives on what intimacy meant and entailed were altered, and idealized notions of love were challenged by the group experience. Some group members questioned and abandoned romanticized beliefs such as "love overcomes all obstacles", "there

are no boundaries in intimacy" and "real love lasts forever". With regards to the nature of this transformation, men's and women's accounts manifested different patterns. For some young men, deeply held beliefs and expectations about love lost their power, creating a sense of disappointment on the one hand, and resulting in a more realistic understanding of how long-term relationships worked, on the other. The notion of love as endlessly tolerant, ceaselessly intense, effortlessly satisfactory and perfect was reevaluated and revised to incorporate an understanding of reciprocity, responsibility and effort. One young man stated that "I've realized that there is no such thing as the perfect relationship and that a good relationship is not a perfect one, but one within certain boundaries….the ideal I have in my mind has taken a more reasonable, realistic shape" (Group0-07) (Appendix M, 13). A couple of young men shared how they started to realize that some of their behaviors might offend those whom they were close to and explained their normalization of swearing and shouting on the basis of the notion of intimacy as limitless acceptance and tolerance, mentioning that "I used to think my partner would not get hurt by the way I talked to her because we were intimate" (Group5-06) (Appendix M, 14). Another man stated how his belief in unceasing and intense excitement when in love was challenged:

> I used to want emotions to be intense all the time … but I guess it doesn't work like that in long term relationships … now this expectation is gradually falling away. Emotions can be very intense at certain points, but one should not expect them to be the same all the time. When emotions lose intensity, I immediately used to think that it's over, it's not working anymore. I do this less often. (Group1-02) (Appendix M, 15)

For some young women, reframing the meaning of love and intimacy required tackling the notion of compliance and searching for a balance between satisfying the

demands of the partner, and asserting autonomy of self. These young women mostly focused on questioning the intertwining of love and obedience, and problematizing the experience of coercive control as well as self-imposed restrictions. In their accounts, a widespread normalization discourse defining jealousy and control as a sign of love and constructing obedience as a sign of commitment clashed with the subjective experience of discomfort and pressure felt when the partner tried to control what one wore, where she went or whom she talked to. The clash deepened when their social network supported the normalization discourses and set the relationship norms to conjoin intimacy and control.

At this juncture, the group experience played a central role in altering perspectives by providing an anchor for an open exploration of different viewpoints and opposing the justification of controlling behaviors in the name of love. Some women derived a feeling of support and validation from the group which questioned and disapproved of the partner's restriction, and introduced autonomy as a new relationship norm. Once there was this shift in perspective and the disentanglement of jealousy, control, and love, these women took a transforming action instead of normalizing, complying or ignoring. One young woman shared how the group supported a transformation in her way of thinking about restriction and personal space, stating that "I don't like when someone intervenes with my affairs. But even when I talked to my friends, they would say 'that's life, don't exaggerate'…I've realized that people in the group have opinions similar to me… I'm not to only one…Then I said, we should sort it out" (Group5-03) (Appendix M, 16). Another young woman explained that her altered way of thinking about jealousy helped her to make meaning out of her own sense of discomfort and provided her with a perspective to evaluate her relationship:

> I was aware that something was off, but I couldn't interpret it …
> He was very jealous … I thought there is jealousy in all
> relationships, of course he would be jealous if a man approaches
> me. I was trying to go on with excuses, but after I came here I
> clearly understand the definition of unsafe relationships. (Group2-
> 06) (Appendix M, 17)

Setting autonomy as a relational norm

Exploring diverse opinions in the group provided the impetus for changing relational norms and altering meaning making processes. As the group members discussed various opinions and learnt what other members thought about what was acceptable or not in romantic relationships, they reflected on their current or past experiences, and reexamined their attitudes towards a range of relational issues like personal space, jealousy, problem solving and anger control. This process of exploration and reflection resulted in setting new relational norms or consolidating previously held beliefs about intimacy. Most group members either adapted autonomy and personal space as normative qualities of close relationships, or strengthened their commitment to them. One young man reflecting on his first significant relationship which ended because of fights over the time they spent with each other stated that "I've realized that we didn't have to spend that much time together. This is not what brings along commitment" (Group1-12) (Appendix M, 18).

Generating meaning out of previous relationships and becoming aware of past behaviors which breached the newly acquired norm of autonomy evoked hope and engendered a willingness to give and receive more personal freedom in future relations. As a result of an open exchange of ideas in the group, some group members realized that their attitudes were shared by others, creating an experience of validation. Being affirmed supported a sense of confidence in their perspective and

empowered them to resist the tendency to conform to normative discourses around intimacy, control and gender roles. One young man shared his sense of relief when he realized he was "doing the right thing" by respecting his partner's individual activities and differentiating himself from "the model of classic Turkish man" (Group2-09). Similarly, a young woman shared how altering her way of thinking about personal space brought a more positive vision on herself and her future relationships:

> If he had one spare hour during the day, I didn't understand why he didn't spend this hour with me. To me, it was nonsense, but here everyone expressed their opinions objectively and I had to listen to them objectively. I couldn't judge them. They started to sound reasonable, because there is such a thing as personal space. Everyone has hobbies and interests that make them who they are and it is necessary to allocate some time for them. I've realized that your partner is not the center of your life. Regarding such issues, what my friends in the group said made a huge contribution … This also helped me to see my own interests. When he didn't spend that one hour with me, I used to sit and be angry during that hour … Now if anything similar happens, I may ask for one hour, because I've realized that I have interests that I am becoming aware of. Allocating time for them or even listening to music on my own is enjoyable. (Group2-05) (Appendix M, 19)

Redefining violence and safety

The process of setting new relational norms and altering perspectives touched upon the issues of violence and safety, and engaged them into the group members' interpretive framework. A good deal of questioning around what counted as violence and what defined safety took place, expanding the definition of violence to include its non-physical forms, to situate it within a dynamic of power imbalance, and to problematize previously normalized behaviors, particularly for those who had been with controlling partners in the past or at the time of the group. Some group members

reported finding a new language to name their partner's behaviors which were vaguely disturbing and difficult to identify. They explained that naming brought clarity and a sense of confidence in their own viewpoint, decreased self-blame and helped to define and identify the problem in their relationship.

As a result, they gained a new perspective to analyze behaviors in terms of safety, which in turn cultivated the motivation to resist pressure and speak up, or changed their own controlling and coercive behaviors. One woman indicated the alteration in her definition of violence and the resulting change in her self-view, stating that "it's not always about hitting, screaming, shouting. I've realized that putting pressure on someone by playing on words is a form of violence. Realizing this helped me to see that I wasn't the only one to blame, he is not that innocent" (Group5-05) (Appendix M, 20). Another woman explained how her self-confidence in her ability to recognize unsafe behaviors increased as a result of reflecting on violence throughout the group:

> [About violence, one is likely to think that] he did it just for once. He may not do it again. He was very angry. One searches for her own mistakes. [One thinks]I did this, maybe that's the reason … One may not realize that there in an element of violence in them. As you talk, reflect, watch videos here, you realize it … Now if I see any sign of violence from the start, I believe I can say no decisively … Maybe during flirting at the beginning, they appeal to you. You think he is interested in where I am, [when he asks] 'Where are you?', 'Who are you with?', you think he is interested in you, but later this may turn out differently. (Group2-03) (Appendix M, 21)

Accepting emotions

Perspectives on emotions were challenged and transformed to shift one's focus from suppressing or disowning them towards a more accepting attitude. A new way of

approaching feelings unfolded, which involved the practices of recognizing, naming and accepting them, as group members navigated the terrain of emotional experiences in romantic relationships together. Such an alteration was more notably evident in men's accounts, where emotions were qualified by negative adjectives like "primal", "simple", "nonsense", "frightening", and described by a language of control and discipline like "manipulating emotions", "managing a crisis", "being polite". Some young men reported developing a more benign and accepting stance towards their own emotions, as they realized that other group members also had similar emotional experiences.

Exploring commonality with the group in terms of those feelings which were deemed as wrong, bad and unwanted played a transformative role by normalizing certain emotional experiences. These young men explained that as they redefined their emotions as meaningful and normal experiences, and developed a more accepting attitude towards them, they blamed themselves less and improved their ability to reflect on and process emotions. A couple of young men described how they felt more relaxed and less anxious about their anger and jealousy, with one man stating that "My opinions about the way to approach emotions has changed…I've experienced acceptance towards my own emotions…When I feel something, I sometimes panic. I feel this panic less often" (Group1-08) (Appendix M, 22). Another young man explained how feeling "normal" helped him feel less burdened and created a space for self-reflection:

My mood fluctuations, my sadness, anger or joy which might seem exaggerated, I've realized in the group that other people also have them. When I see in others those things that feel bad and like a burden to me, they become normal and that burden moves away. When there is this distance, I can see what's happening more clearly. Hearing other people's opinions here, this interactive atmosphere had this positive effect on me. (Group1-03) (Appendix M, 23)

Exploring the opposite sex

The most significant transformation in perspectives pertained to an exploration of the other and involved expanding one's view of the opposite sex. For all heterosexual group members, the group provided a unique opportunity to get into contact with the other and to learn the opinions, feelings, approaches, attitudes and meaning making processes of the opposite sex about romantic relationships. Most group members shared that the allure of the other and a sense of curiosity was the driving force behind their commitment to the group. Such curiosity was evoked as a result of widely held beliefs about the exaggerated differences between men and women, and the construction of the other as unfamiliar, the man as rational and the woman as emotional, as well as a lack of contact with opposite-sex peers and involvement in sex-segregated activities prior to the university. At this juncture, the group turned out to be a valued and cherished setting which provided the opportunity to have an open and honest conversation with the other, and offered an experience unattainable in daily life or same-sex friendships.

Direct contact with the opposite sex enabled most group members to explore the other's way of thinking and meaning making. The group members reported getting into a process of reevaluation and revision of their previous viewpoints and beliefs, as they learnt more about the other, received feedback and paid attention to

the points of disagreement among other members. For those group members, this

process was filled with surprise, fun and challenge. Such contact helped to overcome

assumptions, leading to a learning experience where they started to deconstruct the

widespread discourse on difference and to realize similarities with the opposite sex.

One young man shared that "In an all-male context, one cannot see the other as

similar to oneself. One can picture the other in his mind as if she is something

superficial, someone different or not a human being. But in this setting, one can

realize that she is no different than me" (Group2-11) (Appendix M, 24). In this

regard, the group represented a departure from previous socialization experiences

which drew upon binary and categorical approaches to sex and relational norms. The

following quotes from one young man and woman show how the opportunity to have

direct contact with the opposite sex in the group provided an alternative to their

previous experiences and altered their perspectives:

> From their childhood on, people spend more time in contexts
> where they have same-sex peers. More or less, this is what I
> observe. One is already familiar with the opinions of the same-sex
> or the behaviors they tend to show. In our group, it was a great
> chance to observe different opinions of the opposite-sex and how
> they think. (Group2-09) (Appendix M, 25)

> You can only understand the other in a setting where you are
> together … The group would not be that beneficial, if only women
> or only men were involved. There is this general idea that men are
> more dominant and women are naïve. We would talk amongst each
> other as the naïve, and they would talk to each other somewhere
> else. But in fact by talking here, we understand that both sides can
> be dominant or naïve. (Group2-03) (Appendix M, 26)

Revising one's way of thinking about the other was possible only in a mixed-sex

setting of open and respectful communication, and equal treatment. Imagining

single-sex groups raised concerns over reinforcing one-sided and narrow

observations, polarized and fanaticized viewpoints, and rigid attitudes. It also meant

losing the opportunity to have a reciprocal exchange of ideas. Most young women voiced their concerns over swiftly reaching a consensus and creating a sense of oneness in an all-women group, which would leave no space for reflection. In young women's accounts, the group experience was contrasted with circles of same-sex friends where sharing relational problems initiated a collective process of blaming and degrading men, making negative generalizations about men or siding with the woman and agreeing with her way of thinking. One young women stated that "According to us, men are to blame for everything all the time. All men are the same (laughing). I am joking, but this would have happened. We would say such things like 'We are great. We do everything. They are still not satisfied'. This didn't happen here" (Group2-04) (Appendix M, 27). In that sense, same-sex friends acted as agents of socialization into a discourse of difference between sexes and sustained hostility. Such a setting prevented a reflective observation of diversity within women, an open exchange of opinions with men and an experience of being challenged. Getting to know the other via direct communication counteracted the tendency to blame.

Like women, young men worried about reinforcing and reproducing traditional and patriarchal masculinity norms, and developing more tolerant attitudes towards violence in an all-male group. They explained that the presence of women acted as a brake on their usual socialization process which they described as lacking seriousness and focus, and involving thoughtless comments about the opposite sex. One young man expressed how the presence of women shaped his struggle with patriarchy and prevented its reinforcement:

> Most men here come from a patriarchal structure. Patriarchal ideology permeates our minds. When we go out in public, we keep it under our control, by reading, making changes in our lives, but it penetrates into our consciousness and manifests itself untimely and inappropriately. This could have happened here. If you weren't here or if there was no women, we would have tended towards patriarchy. (Group0-09) (Appendix M, 28)

In sum, the group introduced new perspectives and challenged predominant discourses about love, intimacy and violence by exploring alternative norms and encountering "the other".

4.1.3 Transforming actions

Transforming actions ensued from an open reflection on self, relational norms and discourses, an experience of alteration in self and a willingness to improve relationships. Transforming actions were new behaviors which the group members tried to adopt with the aim of solving a recurrent relational problem, improving their relationship and for some, preserving a valued connection which was at risk of being lost. Those new behaviors emerged as momentary breaks from typical and repeated patterns of reacting, and positioned self in a different role in relation to the partner. Although this break was accompanied by a sense of doubt and uncertainty for some, it engendered a comparison of one's "old self" and new actions, and an expanded vision of self and others. Transforming actions were transformative in two ways: they emerged as a result of becoming aware of the agency and value of self and denoted an alteration in habitual reactions on the one hand, while enhancing the behavioral repertoire of the self-in-relation and altering its capabilities and positioning, on the other. In this manner, they functioned both as the outcome and the

means of a cyclical process of alteration in self and actions, and a move towards equality, safety and autonomy in intimate relationships.

Transforming actions took many different forms, depending on the nature of relational and personal issues experienced while taking part in the group or in the past as well as on the nature of alterations, realizations and reflections about the self. Those actions involved practicing a more assertive and open communication style, preserving personal boundaries, processing and reflecting on emotions, and adopting a collaborative problem solving approach. For some, such actions implied transformative and deep experiences, deemed as significant for exploring whom they could become, shaping their life and exerting a broadened impact on their relationships. Taking such actions indicated a willingness to create a space for negotiating relationship status or roles, and increased confidence in one's ability to solve relational problems, to manage strong emotions and to assert oneself. For some members, they meant breaking a cycle of control, restriction and power inequality, and leaving unsafe and unequal relationships. For others, they brought along an improvement in psychological and relational functioning.

The following sections present the transforming actions the group members engaged in following the group process, and discuss their significance for their lives and relationships.

Asserting self

Narratives of transformative actions aimed at self-assertion were prevalent in women's accounts. For those young women who had been in controlling and violent relationships with men, starting to express oneself more directly and clearly in the

relationship to protect and assert personal boundaries was a milestone. Those young women reported that as they began to feel less doubt about their own sense of discomfort in reaction to their partner's control and restrictive jealousy, and felt validated and supported in their opinions by the group, it became easier for them to speak out. Behaviors like talking about problems, explaining how they felt, problematizing their partner's restrictions, expecting change replaced complying with, justifying, normalizing his demands, and ignoring and silencing their own voice. This transformation was both preceded and followed by an experience of self as agent, capable and autonomous, and in the relational domain, it meant breaking up for some members.

A young woman mentioned that she split up with her boyfriend who controlled her contact with opposite-sex friends and her appearance, after all her attempts to express herself and make a change failed. She stated that "I have more courage. I used to think that I was exaggerating, that I thought only of myself. Then I realized no, this is a problem…I tried to talk…He apologizes, says from now on it will be all right. Then nothing changes" (Group5-03) (Appendix M, 29). Another young woman shared how asserting her own wants resulted in ending her 2-year relationship in which she felt restricted and manipulated, and how her adoption of an open and direct communication style and her realization of her own autonomy and agency facilitated a transformative action and a shift from the role of a compliant partner:

> When our relationship started two years ago, he finished all my social life. He was telling me 'I'm not meeting my friends, why do you? I'm making a sacrifice, you should, too'. I've lived under his pressure for a long time. I became very passive in my social life. Then I realized that I don't have to stop living my life just because he does. I don't have to lose myself … I've realized that I've

restricted so many things for myself … I've started to be straightforward. I used to express myself indirectly. I used to hint at certain things, but after I came here, I started to talk more openly. If there is something disturbing, I've started to tell … This made it possible for me to break up with him. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to do that. (Group2-06) (Appendix M, 30)

In those relationships characterized by inequality and restriction, the realization that one's self was treated unjustly served as an important catalyst for a transforming action. As the group progressed, some young women started to compare the rights and responsibilities of their partner and their own. When such comparison resulted in a sense of unfairness, the result was separation, particularly when the partner was not open to collaboration and working through of the problem of power imbalance. One young woman who struggled with feelings of self-blame and experience of pressure and restriction in her 2.5-year relationship emphasized the injustice she felt and her failed attempts to be understood by her partner, stating that "he was like I can do it [referring to contact with friends], but you can't. I wanted to break up because it was disturbing...When I explained why I wanted to break up, he asked me if there was someone else on my mind. There was no point in talking anymore" (Group5-05) (Appendix M, 31). In a similar vein, another young woman voicing self-doubt and a sense of worthlessness described her realization of inequality in her relationship, and her renewed self-confidence and hope after breaking up:

> I believe it was easier to interpret his behaviors as love before. Here I've realized that he wasn't listening to me when I said no. I've realized that my friends weren't important, but his friends were … I was ignoring all this, thinking that he wanted to spend more time with me, because he missed me. I was ignoring that this decreased my own value as a human being … In the third week of the program, we broke up … I feel that my confidence in myself increased when it comes to relationships. I feel like I know which steps to take or question myself more. This makes me feel like I will have healthier relationships. (Group0-04) (Appendix M, 32)

Renegotiating boundaries

Transforming actions unfolded when one felt like being stuck in or being forced to play a certain role in the relationship. Transforming actions served to create an alternative position. Some young women who mentioned their partner's control over their social life and clothes attempted to renegotiate boundaries in their relationships. Such renegotiation transformed relationship dynamics and improved the couple's communication. This attempt indicated a search for an alternative to compliance or constant fighting over the partner's controlling behaviors.

The realization that one's self was an autonomous agent underlay boundary negotiation, since some women imposed restrictions on themselves to meet their partner's expectations although they were not explicitly forced to do so. What followed was a sense of exploration and exertion of one's independence and agency. A couple of young women reported that they started to question their partner's restrictive jealousy and control, and assumed a more reflective attitude towards this issue following the group, instead of complying. In a similar vein, a young woman shared the feeling of independence she enjoyed when she felt liberated from the self-imposed obligation to accept all of her partner's plans and invitations. Another

woman commented on the positive changes she observed in her partner after her struggle for being accepted as she looks and her resistance to his hurtful reactivity:

> I explained to him I liked the way I looked. I told him 'I would like you to like me as I look. In fact, this isn't that important, because you love me. My appearance is important, ok, but this piercing on my face should not be a significant factor' … I told him 'this is my life. You cannot intervene that much. We are together for 2 years and we have feelings for each other. But, this is too much. I don't intervene with your life. You can do whatever you want, as long as it doesn't harm our relationship or me' … Another issue was the way he talked to me, the way he treated me. He used to talk harshly, degrading me, not explicitly, but covertly. I told him that I didn't want him to talk to me like that. I told him 'I respect you, I never say hurtful things to you. You should not do that too' … Now he talks gently, as I do. (Group5-09) (Appendix M, 33)

The bourgeoning sense of agency was manifested in the domain of sexuality, particularly for those young women who were not in committed relationships or had multiple and casual sexual partners. They reported that they started to become more aware of their desires in sexuality and to communicate them to their partner. Such actions led to a renegotiation of sexual boundaries and indicated a shift of focus from the partner's expectations to the self. For those women, taking this step was experienced as empowering and liberating, decreasing the sense of insecurity and pressure they felt in their sexual encounters with men and serving as a reminder of their own value. One young woman explained how giving voice to her own desires made her feel confident, stating that "I was able to express myself during sexuality. I told him that I didn't want to. I tried not to hurt his feelings or make him feel bad, but I knew what I wanted and conveyed it to my partner…I wasn't subjected to anything. I felt very good about that" (Group2-05) (Appendix M, 34). Another young woman who had difficulty in refusing sexual advances of her friends out of a fear of negative

reactions shared how she started to take her own desires more seriously and asserted

herself in sexuality:

> After 20, men are like, not oppressive, but their expectations
> increase and when they are refused, they are offended, they feel
> sad, and they give strange reactions. Because I was tired of their
> reactions, I started not to care at some point … I started to
> disregard my own enjoyment or pleasure … In the last 2 or 3
> occasions, I encountered the same reaction and this time I was very
> clear and said no … I didn't value myself much or didn't care
> about myself. I've realized that this is not a good trait. (Group4-05)
> (Appendix M, 35)

Practicing collaborative problem solving

Sharing emotions and initiating a collaborative problem solving process were newly

adopted practices which benefited and strengthened the relationship for some of the

women and a couple of men, particularly when both partners were flexible and

attentive towards each other. When the group members were involved in a joint

process with their partner to understand and explore emotions, and to solve

problems, they reported less emotional burden, less reactivity and anger, more

processing of emotions and an increased sense of well-being in daily life. Some

group members mentioned that prior to the group they usually suppressed their

feelings of anger, disappointment or discomfort in valued and significant

relationships. They feared that such emotions could have a destructive impact. As

they realized the consequences of this suppression which took the form of emotional

distance, self-blame or psychological pain, they were more likely to try out an open

and direct way of communication. This, in turn, increased their confidence in

themselves and their partner. One man shared how he openly communicated his

feelings and needs to this girlfriend and the sense of relief it brought, explaining that

"I told her this made me feel uncomfortable… I just want to talk to you about my discomfort. I think it is going to help me relax" (Group1-03) (Appendix M, 36). In a similar vein, a young woman explained how openness transformed her from being a passive receiver to an active agent in the face of relational problems and created a space for mutual problem solving:

> Before, I was ignoring all problems … Although there was something disturbing, I pretended as if there was not. Now I know how to handle them. I know how to explain myself … On one occasion, I calmly explained to him, this is the problem, this is the solution. I was expecting you to do this. Because I couldn't see what I expected, I felt disappointed. I explained everything one by one … Before, I was doing harm to myself because I ignored my anger. I wasn't aware of it … Now, putting it into words gives me confidence. I can express myself and this is a very important characteristic … When there is a problem, we know how to solve it. We know how to approach each other's feelings. (Group2-13) (Appendix M, 37)

Regulating emotions

Putting a hold on old habits to verbalize emotions and needs required a good deal of effort and work. This effort took the form of withholding usual reactions to disappointment and anger such as blaming, mocking, degrading, temporarily cutting off contact, and replacing them with a more open and constructive communication style. The intention and the motivation underlying this effort to act differently crystallized, as some group members began to engage in a reflective evaluation of self and to become aware of the destructive consequences of their usual reactions for self and their partner. The group members reported trying to exercise more control over how they acted when feeling angry. The experience of self as responsible and capable facilitated such practice. Beyond doubt, taking this transforming action was full of conflict for some members. It aroused hesitation about their ability to sustain change in the long run and fear about not discharging their anger sufficiently,

particularly when there were question marks about their willingness to continue investing in the relationship.

Despite concerns, the group members shared how they benefited from regulating their emotions. For some members, putting anger and disappointment into words brought along resolution of certain relational issues and served as an experience which exemplified an alternative way of handling strong feelings with a joint effort. One woman explained her struggle to stop mocking her partner during a fight and her realization of how hurtful her words could be. Another woman shared a change she viewed as significant for herself and her relationship, stating that "when he told me that my personality is cheesy, I didn't say anything because I was very angry. Next day, I talked to him. This was a big step for me. Usually I don't talk, I just make sarcastic comments" (Group2-07) (Appendix M, 38). Another woman described how she and her partner moved away from a cycle of blame, dysregulation and avoidance towards processing anger in collaboration:

> When I get angry and tell him that I can't do anything because of you, he gets angry with me and leaves. When he leaves, I really can't focus on my work because I am angry … After I learned what to do here, I tell him that there is a problem. He asks about it and I explain. He tries to find his mistake. We talk. If I have a mistake, he tells me. We talk about it. When we talk, sometimes the problem is resolved, sometimes not, but my anger doesn't mount. I don't explode … When we do this, because I don't get angry, I can sort my things out … I feel happy, because my other responsibilities are not affected. (Group3-08) (Appendix M, 39)

The shift from reacting to reflecting on anger and jealousy transformed the way some group members engaged with emotions. Strong feelings which were viewed as uncontrollable turned into experiences to be understood, explored and regulated. Some group members adopted practices such as observing their internal world, reflecting on the source of their anger, thinking about different ways of expression,

131

and temporarily distancing and distracting themselves from it, which all cultivated a more reflective attitude towards strong feelings instead of acting on an immediate impulse. This attitude increased their self-awareness and engendered an active form of approaching emotions, which in turn positioned self in a more agent and responsible role.

A sense of control over emotions neutralized the tendency to feel entitled to act reactively when angry and to justify one's actions. Some group members shared that they began to give themselves some time to think before they acted and to calm down when they were angry at their partners or friends. A young woman explained how she tried to explore her anger, stating that "Now when I get angry, I ask myself 'am I really angry at this or is there another reason behind it?'. This is very beneficial to me. I've realized that I calm down….As I reflect on it, I've realized that generally I'm not angry at him and I explode over trivial matters" (Group2-03) (Appendix M, 40). In a similar vein, a young man mentioned that "the ability to think calmly is one of my greatest gains" (Group2-09) (Appendix M, 41). Another man shared how his exercise of control over his anger increased his self-confidence:

> When I've felt that I was unduly angry and I broke someone's heart, I thought I should work on controlling my anger … Now when there is an issue that might make me storm, I prefer to lower my voice or stop talking … When I remain silent and the other person notices that I control my anger, I feel like my willpower increases. This will bring me a lot of benefits in the long run. (Group1-12) (Appendix M, 42)

Understanding one's partner

The changing meaning of intimacy enabled another transforming action leading to decreased tension in the relationship and increased tolerance for difference between partners. As some group members started to expand their understanding of intimacy

to include a notion of personal space and autonomy, they became more accepting of their partner's hobbies, interests, likes and dislikes. Such acceptance replaced reactivity and control, and initiated a reciprocal process of individuation from the partner. This involved giving and receiving more personal space and allocating more time to individual interests, separate social groups and activities. The change resulted from the group members' realization that they denied the rights and freedoms they enjoyed to the partner and an experience of the self as responsible for being unjust. One woman who was in a long-distance relationship explained how her reactions changed after comparing her activities and that of her partner, stating that "I always participate in some activity. I am very active, but I don't want him to go. Then I thought it is nonsense…I go to some activities, he has time, why he doesn't go? Then I've started not to make any trouble when he goes" (Group3-08) (Appendix M, 43). Another woman shared her process of understanding her partner's likes and interest and starting to value them:

> My career is very important to me and my boyfriend never questions it. That's it. If I have an exam tomorrow, we can't meet today or unless there is something very important, my study plan is not disrupted. He doesn't like studying, but for him playing a video game with his friends every night is important. I've realized that when I call him, if he is playing, I ask him to stop and talk to me. Maybe playing a game is not important to me, it is dispensable, but for him studying is the same. I've realized that I don't show respect. I only respect him if he is doing something I deem as valuable. (Group3-12) (Appendix M, 44)

The realization that the partner was an agent with his/her own set of beliefs, desires and feelings fostered a sense of curiosity about his/her mind and a willingness to understand his/her perspective. This realization transformed the way the group members communicated, as they started to ask more questions to explore their partner's feelings, sought more feedback about their behaviors, listened more

attentively and tried to empathize more instead of ignoring, minimizing or reacting. The group members explained that learning diverse opinions and understanding that everyone had an equally valid perspective in the group also contributed to this transformation. One young woman stated that she started to listen to people more carefully. One man explained how the way he viewed communication changed, saying that "I've realized that the things I say or do might be understood very differently by the other… I start to question whether she understands me, instead of assuming that she will" (Group2-10) (Appendix M, 45). Another man explained how acknowledging the fact that his partner has a separate mind enhanced his ability to express himself and to regulate his anger:

> You never know who will be offended by what, no matter how well you know someone. I questioned myself about this … I've changed myself a bit in that regard … I asked her directly, the way I talk, does it disturb you, hurt your feelings? … Sometimes you expect the other to understand what's in your mind without telling her. I used to think that it was obvious, how can you not understand? Because of that, when she didn't understand, I used to get angry. I think I need to express myself more clearly. Sometimes others also don't understand, it is normal. (Group5-06) (Appendix M, 46)

In sum, transforming actions attempted to renegotiate relationship status and norms, and expanded behavioral repertoires by creating an altered view of self as agent, capable, responsible and worthy.

4.2   The pattern of resistance

The pattern of resistance was evident in the accounts of approximately one third of the group members who presented a conflictual and ambivalent narrative. This pattern was observed mostly in young men's talk as well as a couple of women. In

their accounts, the process of resisting reflection and expressing ambivalence was dominant, while there were few references to self-reflection, altered perspectives and transforming actions. Even when there was a mention of such processes, they were unclear and lacked detail, seemed fragmented or singular, and conflicted with the overall narrative. The process of resistance operated to maintain a sense of entitlement, power and status, and conveyed a sense of ambivalence about transformation. Overall, the group was experienced as challenging and demanding. Figure 2 presents the components of the process of resistance and shows how they operated to hinder change towards equality, safety, responsibility and mutuality.

The following sections present the components of resistance the group members showed following the program, and discuss how they hindered transformation. It is important to note that every single component was not found in every single narrative. Rather, the group members showed one or a combination of these components in their accounts.

4.2.1 Resisting reflection, expressing ambivalence

The notions of reciprocity, autonomy, responsibility and safety introduced and discussed in the group as pillars of equal romantic relationships gave rise to resistance and brought about ambivalent accounts of transformation and change. Resistance denoted a particular way of engaging which hindered reflection, inhibited the growth of self-awareness, reinforced a defensive attitude, and mobilized a tendency to persist in one's previous beliefs and attitudes. Resistance had different facets which involved various strategies to detach oneself from the group, to reduce one's sense of responsibility to take steps towards change and render any

transformation unnecessary, and to question and criticize the group. Such strategies involved disengaging, treating the group as an intellectual enterprise, projecting a competent and entitled self-image, and casting oneself as passive and ineffective temporarily and conditionally. Such resistance stemmed from the feeling that the group challenged, opposed and risked discrediting previously held beliefs, hopes and dreams about relationships. This experience evoked frustration, fear and self-doubt. The resulting tension and questioning attitude draw heavily upon binary and categorical thinking between the rational versus the emotional, the analytic versus the experiential, and the romantic versus the realistic. When such discourses dominated one's internal world, shaped one's expectations from intimacy and relationships, and framed one's understanding of emotions, it left no room for flexible thinking and reflection, and suffocated any alternative approach. In a few cases, this clash and tension translated into a patronizing attitude and assuming the role of the "expert" at the time of the interview.
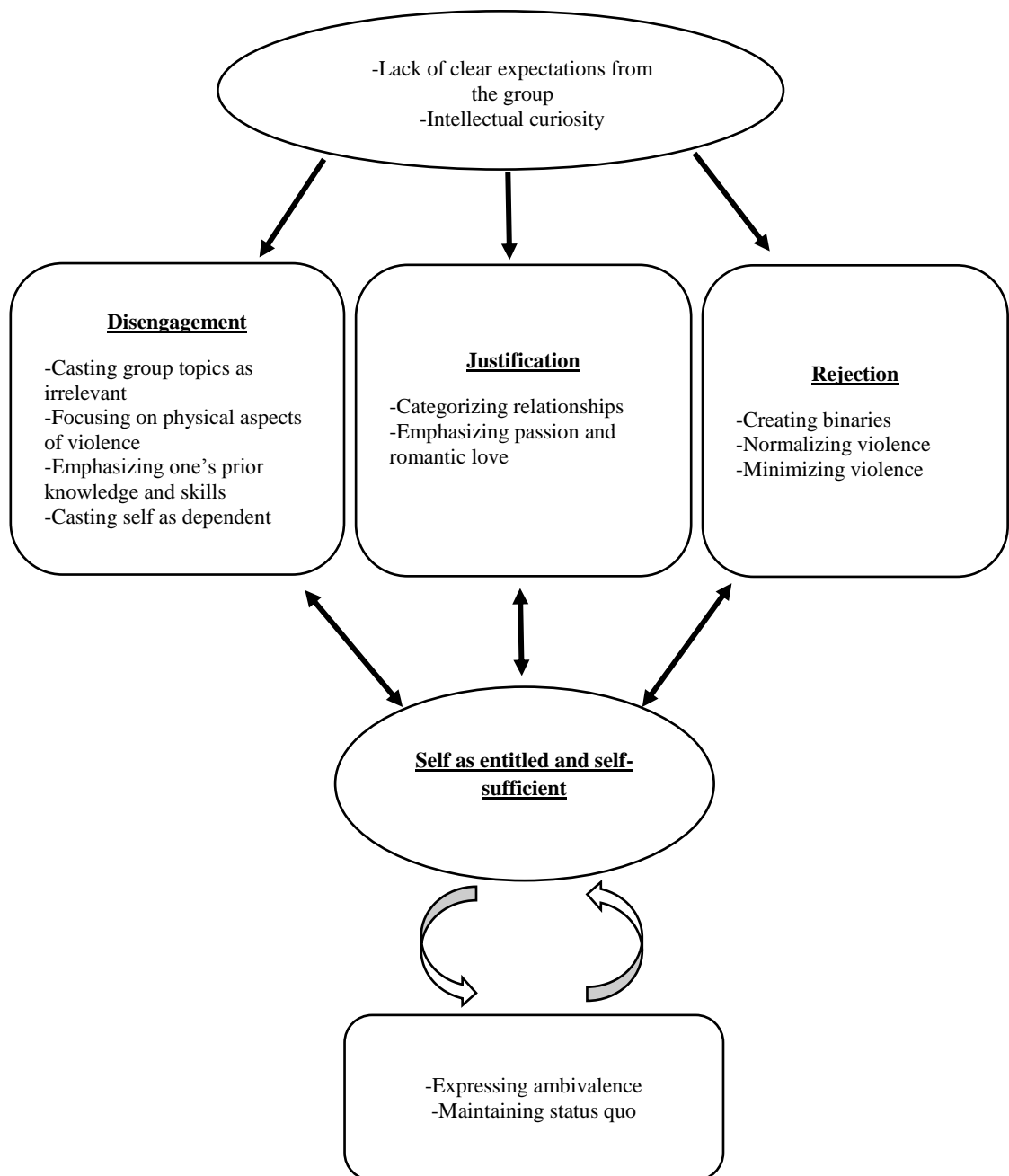
Figure 2. The processes of resistance to equality and safety in dating relationships

Disengaging from the group

Disengagement from the group was a form of resistance which emphasized the irrelevance of relational issues like violence, anger and power for one's life, depriving the group of personal meaning and significance, and reinforcing a view of the group as a solely entertaining or intellectual activity rather than regarding it as an experiential or informative process. One young man likened the group to watching a nice movie, something he enjoyed as an observer rather than as an actor. Such distance was established by creating an extreme image of problematic relationships and violence, making a comparison and differentiating oneself from this image. By using words like "extreme", "abnormal", "chaotic" and "inhumane", some young men and women drew an exaggerated and polarized picture of what troubled relationships looked like and emphasized how such experiences were not a part of their lives. The absence of "serious" problems in one's relationships made it unnecessary to deeply reflect on such issues and removed any opportunity for thinking and self-awareness.

The choice of focusing on physical aspects of violence contributed to this process of disengagement in light of the fact that issues such as jealousy, autonomy, control which pertained to psychological violence had more personal relevance and meaning in one's life. To convey their sense of surprise and reaction to physical violence, a couple of young men inquired about its commonality and expressed a sense of disbelief in its occurrence. Such maneuvers served to project an image of self which was intolerant of physical violence and foreclosed any further reflection about the issue. One young woman clearly described the dismissive attitude of some group members, stating that "Instead of questioning it and asking if this behavior is

violent or not, they were like, this is violence, this is not, done, full stop. This was a kind of preconception" (Group0-04) (Appendix M, 47).

Resistance manifested itself in one's effort to draw an image of self which was competent, self-sufficient and knowledgeable about relationships, emphasizing one's lack of need for any kind of change and focusing on communicating one's prior skills and attitudes. Carefully tailoring one's image to highlight what one had already discovered and learned about intimate relationships and to position oneself as the one who knew rather than as the one who learned emerged as a defensive form of engagement which hindered questioning and demonstrated one's closeness to change. Most young men used words and phrases like "nothing new", "not a totally new world", "not leading to great awareness", "common sense" to describe the impact of the group on their lives and tried to demonstrate how negligible and insignificant the changes they had experienced as a result of the group were.

Giving reference to childhood and family history solidified one's position as someone who was committed to general and abstract concepts such as equality, autonomy discussed in the group and proved how deeply-seated one's way of understanding relationships was. This concern over showing one's prior knowledge and beliefs served to create distance from the group and obstructed reflective thinking. One young man explained his agreement with all the concepts which came up in the group by giving reference to his upbringing, stating that "My parents are not very conservative people. Because I grew up in such an environment, there was always this consensus here…I only confirmed myself. Be it power balance, be it consent, be it sexuality, I already agreed with them all" (Group1-11) (Appendix M, 48). The effort to present oneself as knowledgeable and express one's intellectual curiosity about the topic could be so pressing that it led to praising oneself for one's

own ideas and talking in a lecture-like manner from the position of the "expert". One young man's very first sentence was about showing his level of interest in and information about relationships, stating that "I've also studied this subject before. I've also made my own observations, I asked similar questions about different nations. How do you start relationships, how do they work, how do you establish relationships, questions like these" (Group0-09) (Appendix M, 49).

Focusing on others instead of self, observing couples in one's surroundings and casting oneself in an advisory role for others were other manifestations of the tendency to resist and avoid self-reflection. By observing and analyzing others' relationships and offering them advice about their problems, some group members in this pattern found a particular way of engaging with the group. This granted them the chance of exhibiting their increased knowledge and competence, and displaying their superiority over those who were in need. While serving to disseminate the ideas and premises of the group, this emphasis on helping others simultaneously defined self as immune to any relational problem and transformation. An inquiry about one's experiences in the group gave rise to statements about one's lack of need for support, and brought along narratives of providing guidance to others. Such narratives were described with words like "diagnosing problems", "counseling others", "preaching", and "making recommendations" which all emphasized the hierarchical difference between the giver and the receiver. In this way, some group members treated reflecting on self and others as mutually exclusive processes, created a binary between them, and avoided utilizing the group for self-awareness and development. One young man shared his projections onto the future about the group benefiting his future partner, rather than directly contributing to his process of growth and transformation:

> I don't think that the group will have any impact on my behaviors. It may impact my partner's behaviors … When she faces a problem and comes to me, I will have things to say in terms of offering advice and counsel … The things that I learned and heard may change my partner rather than me. (Group0-06) (Appendix M, 50)

Using justifications for lack of transformation

Attempts to evade one's sense of responsibility for making a change towards safety and agency emerged as resistance maneuvers and created ambivalence in the narratives of transformation. Such attempts showed the conflictual feelings about committing to the notions of effort, accountability, autonomy and non-violence, and expressed self-doubt and lack of confidence in one's ability to do so. One way to reduce a sense of responsibility was to categorize partnerships along a dimension of significance and seriousness, and to regard the group as unhelpful to manage those dating relationships which lacked commitment, intimacy and expectations of emotional attachment. For some group members in this pattern, this way of thinking caused them to postpone benefiting from the group to an uncertain future where they would found the right relationship and the right setting to make a change.

A related strategy was to cast oneself as passive and dependent on the other, and drew upon a notion of reciprocity to indicate the futility of changing as an individual and emphasized one's feeling of powerlessness and ineffectiveness. As meaningful as this emphasis on reciprocity was, in some accounts it served to externalize responsibility for taking steps towards safety and conveyed one's lack of agency and control over one's emotions and problem solving. Following the group, one young man expressed his persistent doubts about his ability to control his anger and to remain silent in an argument, explaining that "the other's reaction would probably turn me upside down" (Group3-10) (Appendix M, 51). Another young man

shared his lack of confidence in himself to establish a safe and collaborative

relationship and regarded himself as being totally in the hands of his partner:

> If there is a problem and if our partner is not constructive like us or
> if our partner doesn't agree that we should confront and solve this
> problem, and find a middle ground, what would happen then? For
> example we talked about safe sexuality, ok, we know it, but what
> matters is that our partner knows it too. How can I convince my
> partner, how can I explain myself … No matter how much we
> think and try to do our best, everything depends on the other.
> (Group3-06) (Appendix M, 52)

Rejecting and questioning the group

Questioning the applicability of the main pillars of the group to one's present life and

how realistic they could be for actual relationships expressed one's hesitation,

conflict and ambivalence about transformation, and provided clues about the roots of

resistance. As some group members began to evaluate their behaviors and

experiences with regards to the definitions of safety discussed in the group and

noticed a disparity, a feeling of alienation arose. A duality was formed between the

group which was regarded as representing and depicting the idealized perfect

partnership, and the reality which was experienced as messy, conflictual, uncertain

and unstable.

When the members in this pattern approached the group as a set of norms and

rules to be followed to establish the perfect relationship and felt insufficient to live

up to these standards, the group assumed an unrealistic, utopian character and evoked

suspicion about its honesty and genuineness. The creation of this binary between the

ideal and the real, and the construction of the image of a problem-free partnership

generated conflictual reactions, diminishing the group's personal relevance and

fostering a dismissive attitude towards the group on the one hand, giving rise to a

sense of admiration and longing for such perfection on the other. A couple of young

men and women, experiencing a mix of strong emotions, explained how "real

relationships" worked in "real life" to defend their own position, to preserve their

sense of integrity, and to question the usefulness of the group, at times in a

patronizing tone. One young man shared his understanding of the group as a place

which aimed for perfection in relationships and demonstrated how it failed to capture

reality:

> It's really not like this in Turkey. We talk about healthy
> communication, but unfortunately in many places there is no such
> communication. With many people, such communication is not
> possible … But of course nice things were learned. But the thing is
> we talked about how to make a relationship perfect. If one of the
> partners has any problems, this dialogue can never be perfect. We
> didn't learn how to overcome this. (Group0-09) (Appendix M, 53)

The binary between the analytical and the experiential paths to meaning making was

another source of questioning and resistance about the group. As some members

treated the group as a manual containing a collection of tips and techniques rather

than as a way of understanding intimacy and violence, and framed it as an analytic

and intellectual venture, the more resistance and opposition they felt. Drawing

heavily upon romanticized discourses about love and intimacy, some young men

experienced the group as a process of "mechanization" and "objectification" of

intimate relationships, which in turn threatened to destroy spontaneity, passion and

uniqueness. A dualism was established between the group representing cold,

analytic, precise cause-and-effect relationships, and the experiential realm

embodying passion, complexity and emotionality. This distinction made it difficult to

commit to and internalize the notions like personal boundaries, consent, power

equality discussed in the group, since it equated such transformation with losing the

intensity of love and pretending to be like somebody else. Regarding love and

intimate relationships as sacred, private and untouchable reinforced the idea that such

emotions and experiences were beyond understanding and examination, and were not

meant to become the object of inquiry in a public setting shared by others. Such fears

and concerns fueled one's resistance and blocked reflection. The first of the

following quotes exemplified a young man's disbelief in the benefit of examining

human behaviors and his emphasis on complexity in relationships, issues which he

thought the group failed to capture. The second quote presents one of the most

memorable examples of a patronizing attitude where a young man read sentences

from a poem and directly asked the researcher to maintain the analytical and the

experiential worlds as separate from each other:

> Maybe we can come up with formulas. We can have mathematical
> formulations like if this happens in a relationship, this will be the
> result and so on. But there are so many parameters in human
> relationships, not just in relations between men and women … I
> think nothing can be resolved by talking or analyzing, because
> people are so diverse. People can do things that a normal man
> would not. When there are a lot of parameters, everything is so
> unstable that we feel like talking will not get us anywhere.
> (Group1-11) (Appendix M, 54)

> It's strange to examine love from the perspective of a scientific
> discipline. I even hesitated to participate in the group because of
> that. I think it's not right to examine love with logic … I believe
> that there are two alternative logics. One is Aristo's normal logic,
> based on cause-effect relationships. The other is the one which
> refuses cause-effect relationships, the logic of art, the logic of
> poetry. I prefer to use the logic of poetry when examining love. I
> was concerned about losing this viewpoint if I examine it with the
> other logic, from the other perspective, the other world. Because
> the two are different, separate worlds. (Group0-07) (Appendix M,
> 55)

The reservations and doubts expressed about the group had a firm basis in

widespread discourses around emotionality and its role in intimacy. Some members'

questions about the group pertained to discussions about emotion regulation, particularly anger control, and fostered an either-or perspective. The common practice of pitting emotionality against rationality appeared as a significant source of resistance, since it operated to misconstrue the goal of the group as suppressing, concealing, and inhibiting strong feelings, and turning group members into "kind", "nice", "civilized" partners. Experiencing the group as a restrictive force brought up the opposing view that emotions were manifestations of one's genuine and open reality, essentially disruptive and uncontrollable, intrinsically boundless and free. Some group members shared their view that intimacy and closeness were supposed to provide a space where emotions could be played out with all their intensity. They felt like they could surrender themselves to the power of emotions in intimacy and could enjoy a sense of freedom without any restrictions, rules and boundaries.

Because some members viewed the group as the representation of rational action, which translated into suppressing and constraining feelings, they felt tension about change. The dominance of the emotionality-rationality divide evoked a concern over losing one's vivid and spontaneous emotional experiences, or a longing for them. Transformation risked enjoying the sense of exemption from thinking and the pleasure of freeing oneself from any boundaries in intimacy. The following two quotes demonstrate the implications of this polarized view of feeling and thinking, with the first quote expressing a young man's disappointment over the group which sided with the "rational" and failed to address his yearning for a relationship where he could let himself go, and the second quote showing a young woman's concern with overthinking the rational course of action and losing the intense experience of being overpowered by love:

Things like putting rationality aside, surrendering myself, being able to feel really furious when angry, expressing my anger instead of bottling it up or crying when I feel like crying, laughing when I feel like laughing. I wish I could express these to the other. (Group0-06) (Appendix M, 56)

When you are in love, you don't really think. If you overthink, maybe it's like you're not surrendering yourself. Always saying I should take a rational step, I should think and so on. When you think too much, it's like you are suppressing your emotions … I feel like either I will overthink and something will be missing, or I will let it go and everything will be a mess. (Group4-10) (Appendix M, 57)

The juxtaposition of emotionality with spontaneity and genuineness had a substantial impact on one's way of understanding violence and fed into the discourses which normalized and justified it. Holding an idealized notion of emotional experiences and describing their expression as manifestations of honesty and openness reinforced accepting attitudes towards violence by framing it as an "effective communication method". Within such a process of normalization, behaviors like swearing, shouting were regarded as expressions of "real" emotions and treated in isolation from the relational dynamics of power and inequality they might be immersed in. From this approach, alternative ways of expression discussed in the group were perceived as "secretive" and "sneaky" strategies, an experience which caused resistance and brought up explanations about why such behaviors were acceptable. Some young men took the topic of violence lightly, ignored its consequences and minimized its scale during the interview. A couple of them made jokes about violence against women. One young man laughed about threatening one's partner with a physical act, stating that "for example, the blow to the cupboard can also target you". Another one humorously suggested rationalizing wife beating in the group to invite diverse opinions.

The normalizing, minimizing and accepting attitudes were supported by justification discourses which highlighted the functionality and necessity of violence to express oneself in intimate relationships and to communicate with the partner. Interweaving the notions of violence, emotional expression, openness and intimacy, some members in this pattern resisted reflecting on the harmful consequences of violence, and presented counterarguments to define it as acceptable, just and insignificant. The following two quotes from two young men demonstrate how violence was construed as "just" a way of expressing anger and conveying one's message, rather than exerting power, making a demand or insisting on compliance, and showed how ignoring the impact of one's behaviors on others impeded reflection and awareness:

> With some people, they know you so well, even if you say a few words, they would understand the nature of a situation. But maybe, from time to time, it might be necessary to experience extreme incidents to make one understand its seriousness … For example should I smash the dishes for the seriousness of a situation to be understood, or can the issue be resolved in a nice dinner. If the other person listens to reason, it is possible to talk and such extreme incidents might not be necessary … You may break things when you are angry. I knew such people. They were not bad people. They were very nice. This was just their way of expressing anger. (Group0-03) (Appendix M, 58)

> It's a perfect reaction. Violence is a very clear communication method. When I use violence against my boyfriend, this does not mean that he is inferior in the power hierarchy. It is a reaction that I showed. He can give the same reaction 15 days later or 1 month later. I don't use violence to oppress him. It's totally my own reaction, with anger, I say 'what the heck are you doing?' … If two people are in a relationship, all cards should be open. If you unite your life, you should be able to shout at him unbelievably when you are angry … You should be able to say 'I did this and that to hurt you'. This means being honest and open. (Group5-07) (Appendix M, 59)

All in all, resistance operated to define self as competent and entitled, reduced one's sense of responsibility for change and took its roots from fear, self-doubt and categorical thinking about the idealized, romantic, passionate, boundless emotionality and the factual, cold, analytic, restrictive rationality.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to test the effectiveness of a dating violence prevention program in improving emotional and relational skills and changing sexist and violence supportive attitudes in a sample of college students in Istanbul. It also aimed to explore the processes which facilitated and hindered change. The goal was to introduce a dating violence prevention agenda and to offer a more integrative and process-oriented framework in response to the polarization between the feminist and skills-based approaches and the dominance of the public health framework. The following sections present an integrative evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative results, and discuss their implications for future dating violence prevention efforts.

5.1 Testing the program's effectiveness

One goal of the present research was to test the effectiveness of the program in improving emotional and relational skills, and changing sexist and violence supportive attitudes. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was used to test a series of hypotheses with the aim of establishing an evidence base for the present program's effectiveness. Overall, the quantitative results failed to provide support for evidence of change in the desired direction on most outcome measures, while qualitative results pointed to the specific conditions under which the program initiated transformation. These results raised methodological and conceptual questions.

5.1.1 Improving emotional and relational skills

Regarding improvements in emotional and relational skills, the analyses showed non-significant results. The results showed no support for the first hypothesis which predicted an improvement after the program in emotion approach coping, more specifically emotion processing and emotion expression. In a similar vein, the second hypothesis which predicted that the program would be effective in improving accommodative behavior during a conflict with a dating partner was not supported. These results partially diverge from the qualitative findings which showed that some group members started to accept their emotions, to reflect on non-violent ways of emotion expression and to engage in collaborative and constructive problem solving after participating in the program.

One likely explanation for the lack of significant results in the quantitative analysis is that some participants did not have relevant life experiences to practice these situation-specific emotional and relational skills between pretest and posttest. The scales which were used in the present research specifically measured emotion approach coping and accommodative behavior during a relational conflict with a dating partner or a close friend. Some group members reported that they either did not have a dating partner or did not have a serious relational conflict throughout the program. In addition, some group members shared examples of how they managed to control their emotions or how they manifested accommodative behavior in a conflict with their parents, while such experiences were not measured in the present study. In addition, the program may exert a delayed influence on behaviors, since processing the group topics might require time as well as future relevant relational experiences. Thus, the difficulty of detecting behavioral change in a specific relationship context within a specified period of time might account for the current non-significant

results. To overcome such methodological challenges, a few large scale studies followed the intervention group prospectively and longitudinally, and inquired into their experiences when they had a dating partner. Although labor- and time-intensive, such methods of data collection might benefit future prevention research and help to assess behavioral changes in the context of relevant relational experiences.

A related second explanation is that the program was effective in improving emotional and relational skills only among a sub-group of the participants, not for the whole sample. Although not a majority, some group members opposed the idea of processing emotions, regulating anger, drawing boundaries or initiating collaboration. They argued that intimate relationships provided spaces to let go of limits, restraints, shoulds and shouldn'ts. On the contrary, some others, particularly those whose partners were open to collaboration shared more examples of accommodative behavior such as talking about problems, deescalating conflicts. Those who were stuck in controlling and restrictive relationships were the ones who practiced self-assertion most. Thus, the program exerted its effects depending on the individual experiences of each participant, rather than demonstrating universal and general effects. For example, Foshee and colleagues (2000) implemented Safe Dates in 15 schools with an average sample size of 115 in each and found a significant reduction in destructive responses to anger in the victim and perpetrator sub-samples, but not in the primary prevention group. The current study could not quantitatively capture such interactions among relationship beliefs, relational experiences and the program's effect, either because such measures were not taken or the small sample size did not allow for such comparisons.

A third explanation is that improving emotion approach coping and accommodative behaviors was not the only target in the present program. Such

behaviors were discussed in the groups as they related to safe and unsafe ways of expressing emotions and of managing conflict. This discussion might not be sufficient to produce change in such skills in the overall sample. For example, one of the few studies which reported an increase in anger management skills with effect sizes of .11 and .14 in a sample of 56 college students focused particularly on teaching these skills and involved didactic methods (Schwartz et al., 2004). In a supporting vein, prior studies which used more comprehensive measures of interpersonal competence and conflict resolution failed to report a significant change following a dating violence prevention program (Foshee et al., 2005; Wolfe et al., 2003). Thus, the activities and methods used in the present program might be as effective as more focused, instructive approaches which allocate a sufficient amount of time to teaching specific skills.

One last caveat relates to the scales used in the present research. These scales were selected because their items tapped some of the emotional and relational skills addressed by the program. However, the use of these scales proved to be problematic on several grounds. The emotional approach coping scale (EACS) yielded high pretest scores, showing that most of the sample had already been frequently engaging in emotion processing and emotion expression prior to the program. In a similar vein, the responses to dissatisfaction scale (RDS) showed relatively high scores at pretest. Such high scores limited the scales' ability to detect further improvement at posttest. Secondly, while the EACS had high internal consistency, some sub-scales of the RDS had low reliabilities and the RDS did not show the same factor structure as in the original scale. Thirdly, both of these behavioral measures showed low-to-moderate correlations with social desirability. None of the previous studies which reported significant improvements in emotional and relational skills has controlled

for social desirability in the dating violence prevention field. The present results indicate that the tendency to give more socially desirable responses is likely to influence self-report measures of behaviors, particularly with regards to the issues of emotional and relational skills in the context of a dating violence prevention agenda.

In light of these results, the best way to capture behavioral changes after dating violence prevention programs might be to use semi-structured qualitative interviews and to ask open-ended questions. Such methods provide the opportunity to ask more in-depth questions, to make observations during the interview and to tackle socially desirable response tendencies. The interview context offers opportunities to learn about specific examples and anecdotes from the group members' lives, and to understand the nature and the meaning of behavioral changes occurring after the program. Such an inquiry would help to gain a more contextualized and in-depth understanding of changing behaviors.

Overall, the present results showed that the program was not effective in producing behavioral change and in improving emotional and relational skills in the overall sample, while supporting transformation in individual cases and under specific conditions.

5.1.2 Challenging ambivalent sexism

Regarding changes in sexist attitudes, the analyses showed mixed results. The third hypothesis predicted that participation in the program would decrease ambivalent sexism towards women. This hypothesis was partially supported with a significant reduction in hostile sexism and a lack of significant change in benevolent sexism. Previous research has not used measures of ambivalence towards women in the

dating violence prevention field. However, there is evidence of significant decreases in traditional gender role attitudes after participation in a dating violence prevention program in high school and college student samples (Foshee et al., 1998, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2004, 2006). The present results are partially in line with these studies. Significant changes in hostile sexism towards women also converged with the present qualitative findings which showed that almost all group members enjoyed sharing their views and experiences with the opposite sex, and started to question the discourse of gender-difference. These results provide support for mixed-sex groups and suggest that such groups may create a more favorable setting for addressing sexist attitudes.

Lack of change in benevolent sexism towards women evidenced in the present study was surprising. Benevolent sexism involves men's protectiveness and possessiveness of women, and obscures the power difference inherent in complementary role divisions between the strong provider male image and the fragile, delicate, weak female image (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism is a more subtle, "seemingly positive" form of sexism; it has been shown to be pervasive in sexist cultures, even though openly hostile attitudes are rejected (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000). In the present research, the participants interact with a campus culture which challenges and criticizes hostile, negative, discriminatory attitudes towards women. Such hostility is visible and clear. On the contrary, benevolent attitudes might be harder to recognize and easier to normalize and justify, because of their supposedly positive and affectionate nature. Another issue is that benevolent sexism is closely aligned with the romanticized and stereotypic portrayals of women and heterosexual love (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The present qualitative analysis showed that romantic ideals of love were prevalent and dominant in the

current sample. Thus, the invisible and benign nature of benevolent sexism as well as its support for the idea of romantic love may explain the lack of significant change in the present research.

The fourth hypothesis which investigated the program's effectiveness in decreasing ambivalent attitudes towards men was not supported. The analysis showed no change in hostile and benevolent attitudes towards men. The findings were unexpected, since the program aimed to address sexist attitudes towards both men and women by introducing a discourse of equality in relational roles and emotion labor. One likely explanation is that equality, safety and violence might be understood as women's issues and considered as irrelevant to men. A related point is that in group discussions and qualitative interviews, the group members usually portrayed men as the perpetrator and the women as the victim of dating violence. The present program did not intend to explicitly reinforce such portrayals, since research results with college student samples point towards heterogeneity of violence in intimate relationships. Nevertheless, some group members shared that they unwittingly referred to stereotypical gender roles in role-plays and small group discussions. This understanding might have sustained the feelings of resentment towards men's power, entitlement and authority as a group. Glick and Fiske (1999) have suggested that these feelings resulted in ambivalence towards men in patriarchal societies, and in the present case they may have sustained ambivalent attitudes.

The present findings of non-significant change in ambivalence towards men and benevolence towards women also show how deeply rooted sexist attitudes are among young people growing up in the patriarchal social and cultural system of Turkey. This system trains young men and women to maintain sexism and to follow traditional prescriptions of being a man or a woman. Although social change is

inevitable, such change does not follow a linear path. Patriarchal values and power imbalances embedded within them are still very influential (Boratav, Fişek, & Ziya, 2017). In the present context, while some of these values are explicitly rejected, some of them are sustained, normalized and justified. Considering how deeply rooted patriarchal values and norms are, it might be reasonable not to observe any significant transformations in relevant attitudes. Although the program provided a space to discuss and challenge them, such a short-term intervention might not be sufficient for changing values which are reinforced by the general dominant discourses of the media, culture and language.

The sexism scales used in the present research, namely the ambivalent sexism scale (ASI) and the ambivalence towards men inventory (AMI) had high internal consistencies. However, their administration in the context of the current study raised a couple of issues. One such issue was that some participants reported a strong negative reaction to some of the items in the scales, because they treated men and women as binary categories, presented very polarized portrayals, and addressed only heterosexual partnerships. Because of that, some reported not taking the questionnaire seriously, which limited the scales' ability to capture the real attitudes they held towards women. A second issue was that the scales tapped attitudes about men's and women's different roles, personality characteristics and behaviors in a wide array of domains, such as work, family, society. Although such general attitudes are likely to influence the domain of intimacy, another scale which included more experience-near statements about dating relationships and specifically measured the impact of sexist norms on dating might be preferred. One last issue was that some items of the scales such as "men need to have more control in the society" reflected a realistic analysis of gender role socialization into a patriarchal society,

156

rather than expressing hostility towards men. Such items created confusion about what was being measured by the scales and some participants had difficulty in responding to such statements.

In light of these results, the best way to measure changes in sexist attitudes in the field of dating violence prevention seems to be developing a new scale, particularly suited to the purpose of the research as well as the characteristics of the sample. Such a new scale might address attitudes towards sexist and gender-based norms in relationships, and capture experiences in heterosexual as well as non-heterosexual partnerships. Because such a task was beyond the limits of the present research, the ASI and the AMI scales were considered as suitable for the current purposes. The reason for this was that they have been tested in Turkish college student samples, they have proven to have good psychometric properties and they have allowed for measuring hostile and benevolent attitudes separately. Until a more specific scale is developed, the ASI and AMI can be used in future dating violence prevention work. However, future studies should acknowledge the limitations and the issues raised with respect to these scales in the present sample of college students, and find ways to tackle them such as revising some items or giving more specific instructions on how to respond.

Overall, the present results showed that the program was effective in decreasing hostile attitudes towards women, but not benevolence towards women and ambivalence towards men. Although the mixed-sex setting of the groups seemed to play a role in decreasing hostility towards women, such contact was not sufficient to change beliefs and attitudes embedded in dominant discourses of patriarchy, gender difference and love.

5.1.3 Challenging violence-supportive attitudes

The fifth hypothesis tested if the program was effective in weakening violence-supportive attitudes. The analyses revealed mixed results. A change in the desired direction was obtained with regards to attitudes towards physical dating violence, while no significant change was found with regards to psychological dating violence. The significant reduction found in the acceptance of physical violence is promising, although the participants mostly reported low endorsement at pretest. After the group, these attitudes became more negative, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator or the victim. During the sessions and qualitative interviews, most group members rarely talked about physical dating violence and viewed it as an uncommon problem in the university context and among the educated. This perspective might have contributed to the significant, yet minor reduction in the acceptance of physical violence. This significant change is consistent with previous studies which report improvements in attitudes towards physical dating violence in middle and high school student samples after the implementation of dating violence prevention programs (Antle et al., 2011; Avery-Leaf et al., 1997; Foshee et al., 1998, 2005; Krajewski et al., 1996; Ting, 2009).

The present analysis also showed that the number of early risk factors experienced in the family before 18 years of age was a significant predictor of posttest attitudes towards men's use of physical violence. The higher the number of risk factors were, the more accepting attitudes towards violence the participants reported at the posttest assessment. These results were relevant to the cycle of violence framework which focuses on early experiences in the family such as violence and neglect to explain dating violence perpetration and victimization in later years. The results indicate that early family experiences which involve violence,

neglect and instability might play a role in normalizing violence and developing more accepting attitudes towards it. Future work might explore how such experiences interact with prevention programs and whether participants with high-risk family backgrounds need special interventions in preventive efforts.

Regarding attitudes towards male and female psychological violence, no significant decrease was found. This finding partially diverged from qualitative findings which showed that some group members learned to recognize non-physical forms of violence and to identify psychologically abusive behaviors. One explanation for this nonsignificant result might be that such gains were reported by some group members, but not all. Those who had been in controlling relationships before and those who experienced minor or major transformations after the program were more likely to report how their way of thinking about violence changed. On the contrary, some others recommended allocating more time to discuss the issue of psychological violence and to learn more about it. A second explanation might be that psychological violence is easier to justify and normalize, because it is invisible and closely aligned with the discourse of romantic and passionate love. Since such discourses were dominant, particularly in the accounts of those who questioned the group's premises of safety, equality, autonomy and responsibility, they might have hindered statistically significant change in the acceptance of psychological violence. Thus, the issue of psychological violence seems to warrant more research, since previous studies in the field of dating violence prevention predominantly focused on attitudes towards physical violence, and they used composite scores of attitudes towards various forms of dating violence (Kuffel & Katz, 2002; McGowan, 1997) rather than measuring them separately.

Violence-supportive norms are aspects of patriarchal cultures. The present results showed that there were moderate associations among ambivalent sexist attitudes and attitudes towards dating violence. Sexist beliefs, traditional gender roles, acceptance and justification of violence operate together to maintain and normalize gender-based power imbalances in intimate relationships. Jointly, sexism and violence-supportive norms provide an interpretative lens to make meaning out of one's behaviors as well as that of the partner's. The finding of minor change in attitudes towards physical dating violence and the non-significant change in attitudes towards psychological dating violence might point to the deeply rooted nature of patriarchal, sexist and violence-supportive norms and discourses in the Turkish social context. Exploring the processes of change with regards to these discourses and meaning making frameworks is highly significant for guiding future dating violence prevention efforts. A related issue is to investigate how such discourses change with regards to male-perpetrated and female-perpetrated violence. The present results surprisingly did not show any differences in that regard.

Regarding the measurement of attitudes towards dating violence, the scales used did not work well in the present context. They were considered as suitable for the present research, because they were adapted to Turkish in a sample of college students (Yumuşak, 2013; Yumuşak & Şahin, 2014) and they provided a tool to measure attitudes towards male and female perpetrated physical and psychological dating violence separately. Although the scales had high internal consistency scores, they were criticized by some group members on the grounds that most items included very negative statements. Some mentioned that no one in the university context could agree with such statements. This limited the scales' ability to measure individual differences in attitudes towards violence and to capture change, if any, from pretest

to posttest. Therefore, the best way to measure attitudes towards various forms of dating violence in future work might be to develop and use scenarios relevant to dating experiences in college student samples. Scenarios which describe examples of violent behaviors and relationship patterns might provide more room to share one's ways of thinking about dating violence, and offer some flexibility to investigate attitudes in heterosexual and homosexual partnerships.

Overall, the present results provided support for conclusion that the program was effective in decreasing acceptance of physical dating violence, while not changing attitudes towards psychological dating violence.

In sum, the quantitative results provided evidence of change in hostile attitudes towards women and supportive attitudes towards physical dating violence, while showing no improvement in emotion approach coping, accommodative behavior, benevolent attitudes towards women, ambivalent sexism towards men, and attitudes towards psychological dating violence. The goal was to test a dating violence prevention program with college students and to provide an evidence-base for its effectiveness. The present analysis failed to provide strong confirming evidence for this goal, while holding some promise for future work. The results demonstrate the need for improvement and revision of the present program for future dating violence prevention efforts.

5.2 Exploring processes of transformation and resistance

A second goal of the present research was to propose a process-oriented approach to dating violence prevention and contribute to a qualitative exploration of processes and mechanisms of transformation or its lack thereof following participation in the

program. This approach is needed to contribute to the dating violence prevention research which was criticized for the lack of evidence on why and how effective programs work (O'Leary et al., 2006; Wekerle & Tanaka, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2006) and for the neglect of a detailed examination of the underlying reasons for defensiveness and undesired changes (Jaffe et al., 1992; Hamby, 2006).

The present analysis revealed two patterns, one providing insight into how transformations in the desired direction was obtained, and the other shedding light on the experiences of resistance and ambivalence. The patterns developed as a result of an interaction among many factors, mainly gender, prior dating experiences, prior socialization into sexism, openness and motivation to change. The four main processes identified in the present analysis, which were engaging in reflective practices, altering perspectives and changing norms, transforming actions, resisting reflection and expressing ambivalence, operated differently in these two patterns. A close examination of these patterns revealed which components of the program facilitated or hindered transformation.

5.2.1 Processes facilitating change

The pattern of transformation found in the present research revealed that the program was an empowering experience for approximately two thirds of the group members. A majority of them were young women. In this pattern, the program mobilized three main processes which facilitated a move towards equal, safe and mutual relationships, and supported one's sense of agency, responsibility and confidence. The three processes identified were engaging in reflective practices, altering perspectives and changing norms, and transforming actions, while resistance was

non-existent or negligible. These processes co-existed, while interacting with each other in various ways and leading to specific or overarching changes in self and relationships. For example, a heterosexual woman who was raised in a traditional small village felt liberated, exerted her agency and independence, and ended a relationship which was characterized by a pattern of restriction, control and blame. A heterosexual young man experienced a sense of validation from the group and felt encouraged about his prior efforts to resist hegemonic masculinity and expand his definition of being a man. A young gay man developed a new perspective on relationships through self-reflection and expressed his hope to transform future relationships. Keeping in mind this diversity in experiences and transformations, the analysis of the accounts in this pattern pointed out the effective components which brought about change.

Engaging in reflective practices was identified as one of the processes in the transformation towards equality, safety and mutuality. The five main components which comprised this process were establishing personal relevance, comparing self with others, observing self from a distance, realizing inconsistencies and realizing the consequences of one's actions. These components indicated an active, directed, focused effort to reflect on self as well as relationships. Such effort was mainly motivated by a desire to resolve relational issues and decrease one's sense of self-doubt and confusion experienced in dating relationships. This process was vital, because it turned the group into a personally meaningful endeavor, increased engagement and fostered an open and flexible attitude. Furthermore, engaging in self-reflection and self-monitoring created an experience of self as agent and responsible, and paved the way for transformations in actions. Some of the components of this process, such as becoming aware of inconsistencies in self, have

been identified and utilized as promising strategies in dissonance-based prevention work (McMillan, Stice, & Rhode, 2011; Stice, Shaw, Becker, & Rohde, 2008) and gender equality interventions (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007), while others have been noted in few qualitative studies on dating violence prevention programs (Ball et al., 2009; Rosen & Bezold, 1996).

Altering perspectives and changing norms was another process which worked hand in hand with engaging in self-reflection. This process was composed of five main components, namely reframing the meaning of love and intimacy, setting autonomy as a relational norm, redefining violence and safety, accepting emotions and exploring the opposite sex. These components challenged prior socialization into discourses on gender, love, intimacy and emotionality which served to normalize and justify violence and control, provided information on violence and safety, and offered an alternative perspective based on equality, responsibility and mutuality. This process emerged as a result of a social and collective learning experience, because exploring what other group members deem as appropriate and setting new relationship norms through group discussions played a critical role. Furthermore, this collective practice created a re-socialization experience and opposed other same-sex friendship networks which minimized, normalized and justified violence and control. Such re-socialization and learning served to decrease self-blame and confusion, provided emotional support and became the driving force underlying transforming actions. These findings are consistent with the emphasis found on social and peer norms in preventive work with young people (Cruwys, Haslam, Fox, & McMahon, 2015; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Reyes et al., 2016) and on re-socialization in feminist and social justice-based clinical perspectives (Enns, 1992b; Israeli & Santor, 2000; Parker, 2008, 2009).

Transforming actions was the third process which originated from and reinforced a sense of self as empowered, agent and responsible, and demonstrated an expansion in relationship roles towards equality, safety and mutuality. This process involved a renegotiation of relational roles and dynamics, a reevaluation of a dating relationship, and an expansion of one's behavioral repertoire. Most group members in this pattern shared examples of self-assertion, collaborative problem solving, emotion regulation, listening and understanding. A group of women ended their relationships. The nature of the transformation the group members went through depended on their gender, the type of relational issues they had as well their partners' willingness to collaborate and show flexibility. For most young women, transformation meant drawing boundaries, asserting self, communicating one's needs and listening to one's partner. For men, it indicated an acceptance of emotions and an acknowledgment of the autonomy of one's partners, and took the form of practicing more open communication. These results lend support to qualitative evaluations of program effectiveness, showing increased self-confidence and acts of self-assertion among females, and improved communication skills among males following participation (Ball et al., 2009; Rosen & Bezold, 1996). The results indicate an expansion in gender roles and show some gender-specific transformations, challenging the link between masculinity and control, and femininity and compliance. Such an expansion seems to provide support to resolve relational issues and to increase psychological well-being among young men and women.

One theme which cut across the three processes was developing an emotional connection to the group. The positive emotional atmosphere in the groups fostered a feeling of attachment, support and validation and decreased feelings of isolation. This positive emotional bond increased engagement with the group, enhanced the

motivation to change, facilitated self-reflection and provided encouragement. In that regard, the program context functioned like a support group, consistent with the qualitative dating violence prevention studies reporting the feelings of being accepted and understood by group members (Ball et al., 2009; Elias-Lambert et al., 2010; Rosen & Bezold, 1996). Such group factors (i.e. cohesiveness, hopefulness, sharing, exploring commonalities) have long been identified and explored in the group psychotherapy literature (Lese & MacNair-Semands, 2000; Tasca et al., 2014), while they have not been systematically investigated in dating violence prevention research.

In sum, the results revealed that a majority of young women and a few men went through a transformation during the program. Such change originated from the operation of three key processes, which were engaging in reflective practices, altering perspectives and changing norms, and transforming actions. The present results lend support to the findings of previous qualitative studies in the field of dating violence prevention as well as other research in prevention science. The present results also expanded previous research by presenting an explanation of transformation grounded in the group members' experiences and identifying the effective components in producing such change. Future work might benefit from incorporating specific interventions and instructions which tap into these components.

5.2.2 Processes hindering change

The pattern of resistance found in the present research showed that the program evoked opposition and resistance and culminated in ambivalence among

approximately one third of the group members. A majority of them were young men. In this pattern, the program mobilized one major process which hindered self-reflection and transformation, namely resisting reflection and expressing ambivalence. The three strategies the group members used in this process were disengagement, justification and rejection. The use of these three strategies separately or simultaneously characterized the overall narratives in this pattern, while references to transformations in perspectives and actions were mostly non-existent or negligible. When such transformations were mentioned, they focused specifically on a single topic and they were discounted as unimportant. Although the group members in this pattern reported enjoying their time in the group and completed the program without any apparent difficulties, their accounts conveyed a feeling of frustration, anxiety and ambivalence about committing to equality and safety in dating relationships. For example, a heterosexual man disengaged from the group by emphasizing his family upbringing, foreclosed reflection by agreeing with *"equality and all"*, and argued that intimate relationships were not analyzable, predictable, and simple. A gay man fervently defended the idea that intimacy meant crossing boundaries, and that an unmodulated expression of passion and anger in a close relationship did not count as violence. A young woman argued that it was acceptable to turn a blind eye to "small" acts of violence and threats, since being tolerant and understanding characterized romantic relationships, and that passion meant losing control of emotions. The analysis of the accounts in this pattern showed that the effects of the program were multifaceted and not unitary, and provided insight into the strategies which hindered change.

Disengaging oneself from the group emerged as one strategy of resistance which served to define violence as an irrelevant issue and to project a competent and

self-sufficient image of self. In the accounts of some group members, dating violence was construed as an extreme event happening "outside their lives and campuses" and "to other people". In other accounts, there was an emphasis on prior knowledge and skills, making it unnecessary to go through personal transformation and shifting the focus to others. These strategies are consistent with the previous studies which show that social discourses about intimate partner violence, which reinforce beliefs such as "it's exaggerated", "it's not my problem" and "it's not common", decrease men's and boys' engagement with violence prevention efforts (Crooks et al., 2007). In addition to minimizing violence and reducing responsibility, such strategies also reflect a concern with preserving status and denying vulnerability, consistent with Addis and Mahalik's (2003) analysis of help-seeking contexts of men which shows that emphasizing one's lack of need to change and one's willingness to share knowledge with others is a strategy to negotiate the conflict between the independent, self-sufficient, strong masculinity ideal and being in need of help. In the present context, disengagement hindered self-reflection and resulted in missed opportunities to take steps towards equality, safety and mutuality in dating relationships.

Justifying violence emerged as another process of resistance which utilized a variety of social discourses to portray dating violence in a positive light and to preserve a sense of entitlement to use it when needed. It was noteworthy that no explicit reference to normative beliefs about gender roles, masculinity and femininity was made, although such references are common in adult men's talk about their violence (Goldner, 1999; Lau & Stevens, 2012). The young people in the present context put forward the argument that violence was an expression of spontaneous, authentic and pure emotions. Suppressing this inner reality clashed with the notion of

passionate, endless, all accepting love, since letting go of one's control over emotions was a sign of real intimacy and it was only possible in the privacy of intimate relationships. In this way, the operation of intersecting discourses on the rational-emotional divide and romantic love created an almost idealized and romanticized notion of dating violence, and shifted attention away from mutuality and non-violence towards an exclusive focus on the "communication needs" of a single partner, concealing the underlying power imbalance and inequality in emotional labor.

A stronger rejection coupled with a patronizing attitude enacted in the interview came to the fore in the accounts of a few heterosexual and gay men who fervently supported and idealized passionate love, authentic experiences and chaos in intimacy. The results implied that discourses on romantic love and emotions serve as meaning making systems which sustain, obscure and justify power imbalances and inequalities in the domain of intimacy and dating, and replace the previously found emphasis on women's roles and duties in studies with adult male batterers (Lau & Stevens, 2012). Although being exposed to the idea of gender equality, feminist opposition and social justice movements through course work and campus culture might explain this shift, the results show that psychological discourses are utilized towards the same end, justifying violence.

In sum, the results revealed that a majority of young men and a few women engaged in processes of resistance which hindered change. Such resistance was expressed through three strategies, which were disengagement, justification and rejection. The present results were consistent with previous research on adult men's talk about violence, and the strategies male batterers use for denial and justification of their violent acts (Goldner, 1999; Lau & Stevens, 2012). The present results also

expanded previous research by identifying the attitudes and ways of thinking which hindered change, by exploring the discourses which supported violence-supportive attitudes among college students, and by highlighting the dominance of the idealized notions of romantic love, emotionality and spontaneity. Future work might benefit from incorporating specific interventions to address resistance and to challenge such discourses.

5.3 Implications for practice

The present research has potential to inform later dating violence prevention efforts. The following recommendations are proposed to guide future efforts which aim to establish a culture of equality and safety among college students, and to reduce the risk of dating violence perpetration and victimization. With these recommendations, the aim is to overcome the issues which led to nonsignificant results in the quantitative analysis. They also attempt to utilize the processes which facilitated change in the pattern of transformation, and to address the perspectives which hindered change in the pattern of resistance. Highlighting the value of integrating the feminist and skills-based perspectives, they aim to present the most promising practices to prevent and intervene in dating violence among college students.

Offering a context for re-socialization

The program served to create a social context for transformation by offering a space to learn about peer norms regarding dating relationships, and initiating a collective and collaborative process of defining what was acceptable and safe. The present research showed that setting new relationship norms and re-socializing into the

notions of equality, safety, autonomy and mutuality played a central role in facilitating change. The results also showed that this socialization context was effective in decreasing hostility towards women and weakening support for physical dating violence. These results are consistent with feminist and social justice models of intervention which posit that domestic and intimate partner violence can be eliminated only in social and community contexts which create a re-socialization experience, sustain a culture of equality and safety, and emphasize collective engagement (Almeida & Durkin, 1999; Parker, 2008, 2009).

Such contexts for re-socialization are considered as essential in some feminist clinical approaches, because growing up in a patriarchal society teaches individuals ways to normalize power imbalances and to sustain beliefs minimizing and justifying oppression, violence and control. Alternative contexts, such as the present program, can oppose same-sex peer networks which play a role in sustaining violence-supportive attitudes, and serve as sites of performing and reproducing hegemonic masculinities (Flood, 2003). Thus, within a feminist clinical paradigm, creating a structured context of re-socialization into a culture of equality and non-violence with the mobilization of peers seems to be a promising strategy for future dating violence prevention efforts.

Addressing discourses on romantic love

The present program offered an understanding of equal and safe relationships, which in turn challenged gendered accounts of passionate love. Expectations, beliefs and perspectives on what love is and what love should be like determined how the program influenced the group members. Changing perspectives on love and the

Beauty and the Beast model of romance which was a dominant theme in group discussions was a major process in transformation. In this model, some young women demonstrated compliance, passivity, and endurance, while some young men expected endless tolerance. In addition to that, the romantic discourse on love colluded with benevolent sexism towards women and acted as one source of resistance to transformation. This romantic fairy tale narrative has been shown to normalize, justify and minimize abuse and control in the name of love, to highlight the attractive, charming and positive aspects of heterosexual partnerships, to collude with sexism (Jackson, 2001; Wood, 2001), and to predict physical and psychological victimization in dating relationships (Papp, Liss, Erchull, Godfrey, & Waaland-Kreutzer, 2017).

As Bell Hooks (2000) noted, developing a clear definition of love grounded on care, concern and regard and differentiating it from abuse and control is the most significant precondition for establishing loving and just relationships. At this juncture, feminist clinical perspectives prove beneficial to offer an alternative definition of love, which has equality, safety, responsibility and mutuality at its core. The skills-based framework can strengthen their case by providing a clear set of steps to practice such notions in relationships. Thus, deconstructing idealized notions of romantic love, engaging critically with the collusion of love and abuse, introducing an alternative discourse on safety and equality in love, and providing practical guidance seem to be strategies with potential for future dating violence prevention programming. They also show the value of integrating feminist and skills-based perspectives to design more effective programs.

Providing psycho-education about emotions

The program provided psycho-education about emotions like anger and jealousy, which in turn challenged beliefs in the uncontrollable and disruptive nature of emotions. For some group members, altered ways of thinking about emotions and emotion regulation played an essential role in facilitating behavioral change. However, an improvement in emotional skills could not be confirmed quantitatively for the overall sample. These results show that more support in the form of information and instruction about emotions is necessary to increase the effectiveness of the program. In addition, the results point to the necessity of addressing beliefs about how emotions operate.

In the present context, keeping the focus on emotions and their expression served to highlight the accountability for one's actions and introduced a language of choice and responsibility. It became apparent that this approach needed to be complemented by a more supportive attitude, which included establishing connection with subjective emotional experiences of group members and supporting the development of new skills. This approach is in line with the principles of feminist clinical perspectives for intimate partner violence which demonstrated the benefit of exploring emotional realities at the individual level while simultaneously problematizing the justification of violence and providing information about safe ways of regulating and expressing intense emotions (Goldner, 1998, 1999, 2004; Vatcher & Bogo, 2001). This practice served to reduce feelings of isolation and facilitated emotion processing and acceptance for some group members, particularly for young men, consistent with research showing the links between restricted emotionality and traditional male socialization (Levant, Halter, Hayden, & Williams, 2009). Thus, emotional experiences and their regulation in dating and intimate

relationships are significant issues for future dating violence prevention efforts. Collaboration between feminist and skills-based approaches may create a supportive learning context, strengthen the discourses of choice and responsibility in the emotional domain, and support the development of new relationship skills.

Redefining violence

The present program aimed to offer new ways of thinking about violence in dating relationships. Beliefs and attitudes about violence played a significant role in determining how the program influenced the group members. For some, changing perspectives on violence played a central role in supporting transformation towards equality, safety and mutuality. For others, violence was considered as acceptable, meaningful and necessary. The quantitative analysis showed that attitude change was notable with respect to physical dating violence, yet not psychological dating violence.

In the present context, imparting information about safety and various types of violence was essential in opposing the normalization and justification discourses around violence and challenging the beliefs and attitudes underlying them. This information provided a language to articulate relational experiences which were vaguely discomforting, yet difficult to identify. This is one of the reasons why psychological violence warrants more discussion; its elusive, invisible nature makes it necessary to address it more openly and deeply. In this context, such naming offered a lens to make meaning out of conflictual experiences of attachment, love, discomfort and self-doubt, reduced self-blame, and brought along transforming actions. Sharing the prevalence and characteristics of dating violence in college

student samples and linking it with an imbalance of power served to frame the issue as a commonly experienced problem, reduced feelings of isolation and challenged the discourses which defined violence as a private and individual matter. These effective strategies might be utilized to address psychological violence in future dating violence prevention work.

The present analysis lend support to feminist clinical approaches which advocate for an examination of women's issues in the context of social and structural inequalities, and view education and consciousness-raising about patriarchy, power and gender as essential elements of empowerment (Aronson & Buchholz, 2001; Enns, 1992a, 1993; Evans et al., 2005; Israeli & Santor, 2000; McGirr & Sullivan, 2017). Overall, raising awareness about the dynamics of violent relationships and developing critical consciousness about violence seem to be indispensable elements of dating violence prevention programming.

Creating inclusive spaces

Having the opportunity to get to know "the opposite sex", particularly for heterosexual group members, emerged as one of the most effective and appealing aspects of the program. Working together in a structured context challenged the essentializing, homogenizing and difference-based formulations of gender. Since patriarchy imposes sex-segregation in social life and dwells on polarized notions of sex difference and heterosexual complementarity, bringing young men and women together offered the chance to re-socialize in a mixed-sex setting and to explore diversity in beliefs, attitudes and views through actual experiences and contact. In mixed-sex groups, assumptions about gender were challenged through direct

communication. Some group members became aware of the similarities between genders and valued learning other's opinions to develop a more balanced, holistic perspective. The all-woman group missed such an opportunity and expressed their disappointment over not learning the opinions of the opposite sex. These results call for an expanded vision of feminist clinical approaches.

Inclusion of men in feminist psychotherapy has generated a lot of discussion in early models which focused exclusively on women's experiences, while later approaches have engaged with an exploration of how feminist principles can be applied to men's psychological and relational problems, including violence, and can be utilized to offer solutions (Kahn, 2010; Wolf, Williams, Darby, Herald, & Schultz, 2018). Feminist practitioners have started to examine the intersections among different social identities, including gender, sexual orientation, and race, to explore diversity among men and women who have been defined as homogeneous groups, and to investigate how patriarchy shapes and restricts men's lives (Kahn, 2010). In the present study, it was noteworthy that the woman-only group had the highest drop-out rate and made the least progress with regards to transformation in perspectives and actions. All group members shared their concerns over polarization in single-sex groups and some young women explicitly criticized them. The results provided strong support for the effectiveness of mixed-sex groups as opposed to single-sex groups in dating violence prevention efforts and highlighted the relevance of the findings for an expanded feminist perspective which criticizes gender-based essentialism in violence research. Therefore, creating an inclusive context for multiple and diverse identities seem to be essential for future programs, since such contexts have the potential to open up new ways of negotiating relationships and to provide an engaging and enriching learning experience.

Supporting engagement

The present program led to disengagement for some young men, which interfered with their ability to reflect on and commit to the notions of equality, safety, responsibility and mutuality. These results point to the significance of finding ways to increase motivation and encourage engagement with efforts which challenge inequality and violence in intimate relationships. One such way is reframing equality and violence as a social justice and human rights issue, and emphasizing the contributions every man and woman can make to establish a culture of equality (Connell, 2005; Pease, 2008). An emphasis on human rights strengthens and justifies the call for establishing and sustaining equality in intimate relationships. Discussing practical steps towards this end might also help to turn abstract concepts into concrete activities, probe self-reflection and provide guidance for future engagement.

The present results also showed that the program did not decrease ambivalent sexism towards men and implied that dating violence was construed as a women's issue. This portrayal makes it easier to assume a dismissive attitude. One strategy to tackle this dismissive attitude might be to explore young men's and women's roles as perpetrators and victims of dating violence. Informing participants about the heterogeneity of dating violence, the diversity in underlying motivations and the prevalence of mutual patterns of violence in college student samples might prove beneficial. Addressing such diversity and heterogeneity in group discussions might help to define violence, safety and power issues as personally relevant and to facilitate reflection. This approach might also help to challenge essentialist ways of thinking, to reduce men's concerns over being blamed or attacked in discussions about violence, and to decrease defensive disengagement. In such work, capturing men's and women's victimization experiences in partnerships might be a starting

177

point to establish relevance and facilitate engagement. Thus, future dating violence prevention programs might benefit from monitoring group members' level of engagement and searching for ways to support it throughout implementation.

Exploring ambivalence

The program culminated in a sense of ambivalence about transformation for some young men and a few women. How to deal with such ambivalence and resistance, particularly with respect to heterosexual men, has been an issue taken up by feminist clinicians (Goldner, 1999; Kahn, 2010) as well as by researchers and activists in masculinity studies (Crooks et al., 2007; Pease, 2008). One common recommendation is to contextualize men's resistance and explore the impact of gender role socialization to understand their ambivalence about change towards equality, while emphasizing responsibility and cooperation at the same time. On the basis of her work on couple therapy with violent men and their partners, Goldner (1999) suggests that deconstructing those men's complex understandings of morality and containing contradictions between actions and values facilitate taking responsibility for one's violence as well as change. In a supporting vein, Kahn (2010) argues that feminist psychotherapy with men should focus on empowering them to make choices free from the pressures of a masculine culture. Ambivalence about change is understandable considering the fact that patriarchal culture pressures men to sustain power and perform control, while also limiting their choices with regards to identity, life style and roles.

In the present context, rather than focusing on masculinity and men per se, exploring potentially conflictual and ambivalent aspects of change, creating a space

to reflect on such transformations and discussing how the values and concepts they learnt fit into their current lives and prior socialization might be a promising strategy. Such reflection might provide room to understand conflicting ideas, explore the meaning of resistance and to take steps to address it in an open conversation. Thus, future dating violence prevention programming may expect and address ambivalence about changing perspectives and actions. Feminist clinical approaches might provide guidance in this endeavor.

Focusing on power

One source of resistance to change was related to a sense of frustration and anxieties about giving up one's entitlement to privileges in the relational domain, such as expecting endless tolerance and acceptance, expressing emotions spontaneously and freely. This sense of loss was more prominent in some young men's accounts. Many authors talked about the costs of changing towards equality, particularly for men, explaining that such change requires abandoning some of the privileges men enjoy such as the services provided by women, control and power, and that it involves facing new and demanding tasks such as developing new relational skills, building the capacity for mutuality and emotional closeness, redefining one's identity (Aronson & Buchholz, 2001; Good, Thomson, & Brathwaite, 2005; Pease, 2008). In the present context, having conversations about ideal relationship roles and expectations, discussing their positive and negative effects on the process of establishing equal, safe and mutual relationships, and encouraging the expression of emotions evoked by such discussions might prove beneficial. This practice may facilitate verbalization of these frustrations, concerns and anxieties and offer an

opportunity to share and process them. Such sharing and reflection may also empower group members to negotiate with the dominant discourses on gender and intimacy in their own way, and put emphasis on choice and agency.

Exploring and contextualizing one's need for power in an intimate relationship and the ways of negotiating it might help to develop a new perspective and facilitate self-reflection. Feminist clinical perspectives have developed a detailed understanding of mutuality in power negotiations, which involve the ability to influence, accommodate to and take care of the partner (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Knudson-Martin, 2013). In the field of sexual violence prevention, Carmody (2003, 2005) made a similar point by demonstrating that reciprocal negotiation of power was an essential element of ethical subjectivities and that sexual violence prevention should present opportunities to capture the complexity of such negotiations rather than emphasizing risks and cultivating avoidance. Furthermore, a focus on power dynamics helps to shift our perspective from essentialist ways of thinking and an exclusive emphasis on the male perpetrator-female victim model to capturing diversity in experiences of violence.

One last strategy might be to discuss the disadvantages of power differences for a couple's functioning as well as the well-being of individual partners, and to explore the intra and interpersonal resources exhausted to sustain power imbalance (Addis & Cohane, 2005). Raising awareness about the relational and emotional costs involved in maintaining inequality may increase motivation to become more engaged with violence prevention efforts. Thus, future dating violence prevention programs might benefit from an in-depth exploration of the meaning of power in intimate relationships among young people, and offer practical advice and encouragement to move from sustaining power imbalance to practicing equality in power negotiations.

5.4 Implications for research

The present research has potential to inform later research on the effectiveness of dating violence prevention programs targeting college student samples. The following points are highlighted to guide research decisions in future studies which aim to establish an evidence-base for effective programs and to influence social policies.

Developing new measurement tools

The present research showed that there is a need for new measurement tools which are suitable for college student samples, and are able to capture behavioral and attitudinal changes after prevention programs. A more flexible approach and an open-ended format might prove useful in future studies. Such an approach allows for a more contextualized understanding of the studied behaviors and attitudes, and helps to explore subjective experiences and meaning making systems about dating violence. Semi-structured interviews, vignettes and scenario discussions might be more informative than those questionnaires which present a predetermined set of statements. In addition, new scales about sexism and attitudes towards dating violence are needed, since available measures are likely to fail to capture individual differences in such attitudes. Thus, future work might benefit from developing new measurement tools for pretest-posttest comparisons.

Conducting follow-up studies

The present research investigated change in behavioral and attitudinal measures immediately after the program. Conducting follow-up studies and carrying out longitudinal research might be the next step for future work. The impact of prevention programs might be different in the short-run and in the long-run. Longitudinal research can help to understand such differences. Future research might benefit from using online tools to facilitate data collection and to communicate and keep in touch with participants in the long run.

5.5 Limitations

The present research had some limitations related to sample characteristics, measurement tools and program design. One significant limitation was that the present research was conducted at Bogazici University. Located in Istanbul, the university culture was characterized by an acceptance of diversity, an emphasis on high academic achievement and a support for gender equality. Therefore, the present research was undertaken in a privileged, urban and egalitarian context. This limited the generalizability of the current findings. In another university, the effect of the program and the reactions it gets might be different. One difficulty might be to generate interest in the program, as was the case at Istanbul Bilgi University. Thus, the present results should be interpreted within the limits of the context where the study was carried out. Recruiting a more diverse student sample from different universities would be an interesting task for future research.

Another limitation of the present study was that some of the group members participated in the program for reasons such as getting to know new people, earning

extra credits, rather than learning more about the group topics. Although offering extra credits helped to recruit more participants and to undertake the research, it also led to a mixed sample in terms of engagement and level of internal motivation. Some participants valued the group, considered it as a learning opportunity and needed more sharing and self-disclosure during the sessions, while others did not express a similar level of engagement. Such diversity, although expected to a certain extent, restricted the decisions made during program implementation. One decision to make was to whether ask questions about personal experiences and to create a space for self-disclosure. Another decision was to whether give weekly assignments to establish a link between group topics and daily lives of the group members. Because some participants were motivated by academic and intellectual gains, and the study was demanding in terms of its time commitment, such interventions were not fully practiced. Future research might use different recruitment methods and might frame the advertisement for the program in a different way to attract those participants who are willing to reflect on relationship issues and to learn more about safety and violence in dating relations.

A related issue was that no inclusion-exclusion criteria were used in the recruitment phase. This decision was partly informed by the preventive approach adopted in the present study. The aim was to widely disseminate the notions of equality, safety, mutuality and accountability to a large target group. Another reason was to ensure that a sufficient number of participants were recruited to carry out the research. However, the results showed that some participants (i.e. those who had relevant dating experiences in their current or past relationships, those who were more psychologically-minded) benefited from the program more as compared to others. In future research, using a screening instrument to measure such

characteristics and/or conducting a pre-assessment interview to understand motivations underlying participation might be useful to increase the cost-effectiveness of prevention programs. Such screening might also prevent the participation of those who resisted reflection and shared more rigid opinions about violence-supportive norms and sexist attitudes. Such groups may need a somewhat different approach to help them question and evaluate their stance. Applying these inclusion-exclusion criteria in future research would help to revise available programs in accordance with the needs of various groups of young people and to develop a more relevant content and language.

The present study had a quasi-experimental design. The applicants could not be assigned randomly to prevention and control groups. Time limit for the recruitment of the participants and the abrupt decrease in responses to e-mail invitations sent to potential applicants led to using different means of recruitment for prevention and control groups. In addition to this, the prevention participants could not be randomly assigned to each group. Because the program was implemented during the day time, the applicants were assigned to each group simply according to their schedules. This gave the researcher limited control over group composition. Although care was taken to maximize diversity in the groups, some group members were already friends or studied at the same department. For example, in the all-woman group most group members knew each other from the common courses they took, and this familiarity limited their sense of comfort, particularly for some of them, in the group.

Measurement of change proved to be a challenging task in the present research. The measures of emotional and relational skills were specific to a certain relationship context which was not relevant for some participants. The measures of

sexist and violence-supportive attitudes were too negative and heterosexist for some group members. A limited number of valid and reliable scales suitable for use in Turkish samples was one reason for the current difficulty. Another issue was finding measures which were specific and relevant to the desired outcomes. Because the present program addressed various forms of violence and a wide range of emotional and relational experiences, it was difficult to specify outcome variables. This decision was informed by the program content, available scales in Turkish and previous research in the literature. These issues show the need for new measurement tools to reliably capture change, or its lack thereof, in future effectiveness research in the field of dating violence prevention.

Another limitation is that the present program addressed individual behaviors in dating relationships. Although the program was implemented in a group setting, it did not involve a more systemic intervention which aimed to transform the campus culture and to increase attention to the issue of dating violence. Because of that, the program may inadvertently send the message that the prevention of dating violence is a private, individual matter. Although individuals have the responsibility to protect and control themselves, there are many social reasons explaining why they cannot or do not do so. The present research supports the view that the most effective strategy to tackle dating violence is to integrate contextual, multi-systemic interventions. The present program can be considered as an initial step to the significance of macro-level solutions which involve transforming cultures and discourses.

One last limitation was related to program design. Although for some group members the diversity of activities which involved verbal, visual and bodily means of self-expression helped to keep them engaged, a couple of members shared that they felt bored when they participated in the same activity repeatedly and needed a

change in the mode of communication they used. Most group members expressed their preference for more visual, non-verbal and game-like activities. Some others mentioned their need for supplementary materials about the issues discussed in the groups. During program development, finding relevant and informative videos, visual materials and information sources in Turkish was a challenging task. Such materials and activities had to be limited in number. Future work might incorporate more activities from art therapy approaches and techniques, and focus on generating more visual materials.

5.6 Conclusion

The present research aimed to test the effectiveness of a dating violence prevention program among college students in Istanbul and to provide an evidence base for future research. The results failed to show support for significant changes in most outcome measures after the program. No improvement in emotion approach coping, accommodative behavior, benevolent attitudes towards women, ambivalent attitudes towards men and attitudes towards psychological dating violence was found. The significant changes obtained in hostile attitudes towards women and in attitudes towards physical dating violence were promising. In addition, there were some examples of individual cases which shared anecdotal evidence on transformations in behaviors and attitudes. The present program was one of the first systematic attempts to prevent dating violence among college students in Turkey. Although the evidence for effectiveness is not as strong as expected, the present results are intended to initiate more research and activist work to prevent dating violence in college campuses.

A second aim of the present research was to explore the processes which facilitated or hindered transformation towards safe and equal dating relationships. The results showed that the some group members went through an extensive or specific transformation through following these steps: engaging in reflective practices, changing perspectives and altering norms, and transforming actions. The effective components in these steps were identified. In addition, the present results also showed that the program fostered ambivalence and resistance to change for some participants. The resistance was conveyed through disengagement from the group, justification of violence and rejection of the program content. The discourses and perspectives used as sources of this resistance were identified.

One last aim of the present research was to utilize feminist clinical approaches in dating violence prevention efforts and to develop an alternative framework to the polarization between the skills-based and feminist approaches found in the literature. The present work showed that the two frameworks can work together and their integration can offer a comprehensive perspective for future programs. In dating violence prevention programming, the feminist perspective provides a lens to understand social and contextual realities, to problematize power imbalances and emphasizes the significance of re-socialization. The call for equality and justice has been the essence of feminism since its inception. A concern with diversity and inclusion has emerged in more recent feminist work. These fundamental principles should guide future dating violence prevention efforts. The skills-based perspective can promote such efforts by showing practical steps towards change, providing emotional encouragement, and strengthening a language of choice and responsibility. Rather than polarization, the incorporation of the skills-based

practices into a feminist clinical paradigm seems to be the most promising strategy

for theoretically-driven, effective prevention work.

DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Program	Program Type	Number of Sessions	Aims	Target Group	Activities	Facilitators	Control Group	Follow-up
Safe Dates (Foshee et al., 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005)	Universal, conducted in schools	10 weekly sessions, 45 minutes each	-Challenging attitudes towards dating violence and traditional gender roles -Improving conflict management skills -Increasing knowledge about community resources for victims and perpetrators of violence and supporting help-seeking behaviors	High school students, mixed-gender	School activities -Theater performance -10-session class curriculum -Poster context Community activities -Service provision and training of staff	Teachers	Only community activities	1-month to 4-years
BRIGHT (Building Relationships in Greater Harmony Together) (Avery-Leaf et al., 1997)	Universal, conducted in schools	5 daily sessions	-Discussing the themes of equality and violence in dating relationships -Supporting healthy communication skills and teaching non-violent strategies -Disseminating information about services for victims and perpetrators of violence	High school students, mixed-gender	Didactic, skills-based	Health teachers	No treatment	X
Ending Violence (Jaycox et al., 2006)	Universal, conducted in schools	3 class-period sessions	-Teaching about types and dynamics of abuse and providing information about laws and legal regulations about domestic violence -Introducing safe and healthy relationships	High school students, mixed-gender	-Role plays and exercises -Didactic presentation	Attorneys	Standard health curriculum	6 months

Program	Program Type	Number of Sessions	Aims	Target Group	Activities	Facilitators	Control Group	Follow-up
LoveU2 (Antle et al., 2011; Pearson, 2004)	Selective, conducted in schools	2 daily sessions, 4 hours each	-Improving problem solving and conflict resolution abilities -Increasing knowledge about non-abusive and abusive aspects of relationships	High school students who had individual, familial and social risk factors for dating abuse, mixed-gender	-Didactic presentation -Group exercise	Trained staff	X	X
Building a Lasting Love (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Turner, 2012)	Selective	4 weekly sessions, 1.5 hours each	-Increasing knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships -Supporting non-violent conflict resolution and emotion regulation skills	High school age, pregnant African American teens	-Didactic teaching -Group discussions -Activities related to the content	Clinical psychologist	No treatment	X
Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program (Macgowan, 1997)	Universal, conducted in schools	5 daily sessions, 1 hour each	-Providing information about abuse, violence and power -Teaching about healthy and safe relationships	Middle school students, mixed-gender	-Discussions -Experiential activities	Teachers	No treatment	X

Program	Program Type	Number of Sessions	Aims	Target Group	Activities	Facilitators	Control Group	Follow-up
LoveU2 (Antle et al., 2011; Pearson, 2004)	Selective, conducted in schools	2 daily sessions, 4 hours each	-Improving problem solving and conflict resolution abilities -Increasing knowledge about non-abusive and abusive aspects of relationships	High school students who had individual, familial and social risk factors for dating abuse, mixed-gender	-Didactic presentation -Group exercise	Trained staff	X	X
Building a Lasting Love (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Turner, 2012)	Selective	4 weekly sessions, 1.5 hours each	-Increasing knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships -Supporting non-violent conflict resolution and emotion regulation skills	High school age, pregnant African American teens	-Didactic teaching -Group discussions -Activities related to the content	Clinical psychologist	No treatment	X
Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program (Macgowan, 1997)	Universal, conducted in schools	5 daily sessions, 1 hour each	-Providing information about abuse, violence and power -Teaching about healthy and safe relationships	Middle school students, mixed-gender	-Discussions -Experiential activities	Teachers	No treatment	X

191

Program	Program Type	Number of Sessions	Aims	Target Group	Activities	Facilitators	Control Group	Follow-up
Shifting Boundaries (Taylor et al., 2013)	Universal, conducted in schools	6 weekly sessions	-Teaching how to protect personal boundaries in relationships -Providing information about laws and regulations regarding dating violence -Teaching the significance of awareness-raising activities and encouraging to take action as bystanders	Middle school students, mixed-gender	-Didactic presentation -In-class activities	Trained staff	No treatment	6 months
Skills for Violence-Free Relationships (Krajewski et al., 1996)	Universal, conducted in schools	10 sessions	-Addressing gender roles and stereotypes -Improving understanding of violence and its relationship with power -Teaching healthy conflict management strategies	Middle school students, mixed-gender	Not specified	Health education teacher and counselors	Standard health curriculum	5 months
Expect Respect (Ball et al., 2009, 2012)	Indicated, conducted in schools	24 weekly sessions, 55 minutes each	-Encouraging the establishment of supportive and respectful group relationships -Exploring the meaning and signs of equality and violence in dating relationships -Supporting the development of skills for healthy communication and relationships	Middle and high school students who had been involved in violence peer, dating or family relationships, single-gender	-Role plays -Educational videos -Art and poetry	Group facilitators (social workers, counselors)	X	X

Program	Program Type	Number of Sessions	Aims	Target Group	Activities	Facilitators	Control Group	Follow-up
Rosen & Bezold (1996)	Selective, conducted at school and college	9 sessions, 1 hour each	-Increasing the understanding of abuse and how it operates in interpersonal relationships -Supporting the sense of confidence to make healthy choices and stand against violence - Improving interpersonal skills	High school female students who were referred by a school counselor, female college students	-Group discussion -Experiential activities and exercised	Prevention specialist	X	X
Schwartz et al. (2004, 2006)	Universal, conducted at college	4 sessions, 1.5 hours each	-Addressing gender role stereotypes and gender-role conflict and exploring their relationship with abuse -Challenging unhealthy entitlement and relational expectations -Teaching conflict resolution and anger control skills	College students, mixed-gender	-Didactic instruction -Experiential activities	Doctoral students	No treatment	X
Kuffel & Katz (2002)	Universal, conducted at college	1 session	-Improving the ability to recognize abuse in relationships -Providing information about services for dating violence	College students who were in a dating relationship, mixed-gender	-Psycho-educational video -Group discussion	Graduate psychology students	Watched a sitcom video	4-6 weeks

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE REVISED CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Once	Twice	3-5 times	6-10 times	11-20 times	More than 20 times	Before in the past year	Never

1. I insulted or swore at my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
2. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
3. I twisted my partner's arm or hair.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
4. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
5. I had a sprain, bruise or small cut because of a fight with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
6. My partner had a sprain, bruise or small cut because of a fight with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
1 kez	2 kez	3-5 kez	6-10 kez	11-20 kez	20'den fazla	Son 1 yıldan daha önce	Hiç

1. Erkek/kız arkadaşıma hakaret ya da küfür ettim.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
2. Erkek/kız arkadaşım bana hakaret ya da küfür etti.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
3. Erkek/kız arkadaşımın kolunu burktum ya da saçını çektim.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
4. Erkek/kız arkadaşım da benim kolumu burktu ya da saçımı çekti.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
5. Kavgamızın sonucunda vücudumda incinme, çürük ya da ufak kesikler oldu.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
6. Kavgamızın sonucunda erkek/kız arkadaşımın vücudunda incinme, çürük ya da ufak kesikler oldu.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM RESPONSES TO DISSATISFACTION SCALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always

1. When my partner is rude or inconsiderate, I begin to think about ending our relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. When my partner is rude or inconsiderate, I try to resolve the situation and improve conditions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3. When my partner is angry with me and ignores me for a while, I get away for a while and avoid dealing with the problem.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4. When my partner is upset and says something mean, I feel so angry that I want to walk right out the door.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hiç yapmam		Nadiren yaparım		Bazen yaparım		Sıkça yaparım		Sürekli yaparım

1. İlişki yaşadığım kişi gerçekten kötü bir şey söylediğinde onu terk etmekle tehdit ederim.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. İlişki yaşadığım kişi bana kaba davrandığında durumu çözmeye ve koşulları düzeltmeye çalışırım.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3. İlişki yaşadığım kişi düşüncesizce bir şey yapınca bu konuyla ilgilenmekten kaçınırım.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4. İlişki yaşadığım kişi bana kaba davrandığında çok kızarım ve çekip gitmek isterim.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM EMOTION APPROACH COPING SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Always

1. I take time to figure out what I'm really feeling.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I take time to express my emotions.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I let my feelings come out freely.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I realize that my feelings are valid and important.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I delve into my feelings to get a thorough understanding of them.	1 2 3 4 5

1	2	3	4	5
Hiçbir Zaman	Nadiren	Arada Sırada	Çoğunlukla	Her Zaman

1. Bu durumda gerçekten ne hissettiğimi anlamaya zaman ayırırım.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Bu durumda duygularımı ifade etmenin bir yolunu bulurum.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Bu durumda duygularımı ifade ederken özgür davranırım.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Bu durumda duygularımın doğru ve önemli olduğunun farkına varırım.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Bu durumda neler hissettiğimi keşfetmeye çalışırım.	1 2 3 4 5

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM AMBIVALENT SEXISM INVENTORY

1	2	3	4	5	6
Completely Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Completely Agree

1. Despite accomplishment, men are incomplete without women.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Women seek special favors under guise of equality.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. In a disaster, women need to be rescued first.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks as sexist.	1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Pek Katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

1. Ne kadar başarılı olursa olsun, bir kadının sevgisine sahip olmadıkça bir erkek gerçek anlamda bütün bir insan olamaz.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Gerçekte birçok kadın "eşitlik" arıyoruz maskesi altında işe alınmalarda kendilerinin kayırılması gibi özel muameleler arıyorlar.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Bir felaket durumunda kadınlar erkeklerden önce kurtarılmalıdır.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Birçok kadın masum söz veya davranışları cinsel ayrımcılık olarak yorumlamaktadır.	1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS MEN INVENTORY

1	2	3	4	5	6
Completely Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Completely Agree

1. Women are incomplete without men.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Most men are really like children.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Men are more willing to take risks than women.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. When in positions of power, men sexually harass women.	1 2 3 4 5 6

1	2	3	4	5	6
Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Pek Katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

1. Kadınlar erkeksiz eksiktirler.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Özüne bakıldığında, çoğu erkek gerçekten çocuk gibidir.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Erkekler kadınlara oranla risk almaya daha gönüllüdürler.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Çoğu erkek, kadınlar üzerinde güç sahibi oldukları bir pozisyonda bulundukları anda, üstü kapalı yolla bile olsa kadınları cinsel açıdan taciz ederler.	1 2 3 4 5 6

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS DATING VIOLENCE

SCALES

1	2	3	4	5
Completely Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Completely Agree

1. A guy should not insult her girlfriend.	1 2 3 4 5
2. A guy should not tell her girlfriend what to do.	1 2 3 4 5
3. A girl should ask her boyfriend first before going out with her friends.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Relationships always work best when girls please their boyfriends.	1 2 3 4 5
5. There is never a reason for a guy to threaten his girlfriend.	1 2 3 4 5

1	2	3	4	5
Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

1. Bir erkek kız arkadaşını aşağılamamalıdır.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Bir erkek kız arkadaşına ne yapması gerektiğini söylememelidir.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Bir kız, arkadaşlarıyla dışarıya çıkmadan önce erkek arkadaşına sormalıdır.	1 2 3 4 5
4. İlişkiler daima kızlar erkek arkadaşlarını memnun ettiklerinde yolunda gider.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Bir erkeğin kız arkadaşını tehdit etmesi için asla bir sebep olamaz.	1 2 3 4 5

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE THERAPEUTIC FACTORS INVENTORY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Agree	Completely Agree

1. Because I've got a lot in common with other group members, I'm starting to think that I may have something in common with people outside group too.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I feel a sense of belonging in this group.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. In group, I've learned that I have more similarities with others than I would have guessed.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Pek Katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Oldukça Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

1. Diğer grup üyeleriyle birçok ortak noktam olduğu için, grup dışındaki insanlarla da bazı ortak noktalarım olabileceğini düşünmeye başladım.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Bu grupta ait olma duygusunu yaşıyorum.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Grupta, diğerleriyle sandığımdan daha çok benzer yönlerim olduğunu öğrendim.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM MARLOWE-CROWNE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

SCALE

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work, if I am not encouraged.	Yes	No
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	Yes	No
3. On a few occasions, I have given up something because I thought too little of my ability.	Yes	No
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	Yes	No

1. Teşvik edilmediğimde işime devam etmekte zorlanırım.	Doğru	Yanlış
2. Bazen istediğim olmadığında sinirlenirim.	Doğru	Yanlış
3. Bazı durumlarda kabiliyetime güvenmediğim için bir şeyi yapmaktan vazgeçtiğim olmuştur.	Doğru	Yanlış
4. Haklı olduklarını bildiğim halde otorite konumundaki kişilere karşı çıktığım anlar olmuştur.	Doğru	Yanlış

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES SCALE

1. In your childhood, did a parent or other adult in the household swear at, insult or put you down?	Yes	No
2. In your childhood, did a parent or other adult in the household push, grab, shove or slap you?	Yes	No
3. In your childhood, was yout mother pushed, slapped, hit?	Yes	No

1. Çocukluğunuzda anne veya babanız size karşı küfür, küçümseme, hakaret gibi davranışlarda bulundu mu?	Evet	Hayır
2. Çocukluğunuzda anne veya babanız size karşı vurma, tokat atma, itme gibi davranışlarda bulundu mu?	Evet	Hayır
3. Çocukluğunuzda anneniz vurma, tokat atma, dövme gibi davranışlarla karşılaştı mı?	Evet	Hayır

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

1. Doğum tarihiniz (gün/ay/yıl): *Date of birth (day/month/year)*	……/…../…………			
2. Doğum yeriniz (il/ilçe): *Place of birth (province, district)*				
3. Cinsiyetiniz: *Gender*	Kadın *Female*	Erkek Male	Diğer Other	
4. Bölümünüz: *Department*				
5. Okulda kaçıncı döneminiz? *Semester at the university*				
6. Kaç yıldır İstanbul'da yaşıyorsunuz? *For how many years you have been living in İstanbul?*				
7. İstanbul'a gelmeden önce yaşadığınız şehir/şehirler? Ne kadar süreyle? *The city/cities you lived in before you came to Istanbul? For how long?*				
8. Cinsel yöneliminiz: *Sexual orientation*	Heteroseksüel *Heterosexual*	Homoseksüel *Homosexual*	Biseksüel *Bisexual*	Diğer *Other*
9. Annenizin eğitim düzeyi (mezun olduğu son okul): *Maternal education (the highest degree she holds)*				
10. Annenizin mesleği: Maternal occupation				
11. Babanızın eğitim düzeyi (mezun olduğu son okul): *Paternal education (the highest degree he earned)*				
12. Babanızın mesleği: Paternal occupation				

13. Şu anda romantik bir ilişkiniz var mı? *Do you currently have a romantic relationship?*	Evet *Yes*	Hayır *No*
	14.a. Evet ise, ne kadar süredir birliktesiniz? *If yes, for how long you have been together?* ………..	
14. Şimdiye kadar <u>en az 3 ay sürmüş</u> bir romantik ilişkiniz oldu mu? *Have you ever had a romantic relationship that has lasted longer than 3 months?*	Evet *Yes*	Hayır *No*
	15.a. Evet ise, kaç tane? *If yes, how many?* ………	
15. En uzun sureli romantik ilişkiniz kaç hafta/ay/yıl sürdü? *How many weeks/months/years did you longest romantic relationship last?*		

16. İlk romantik ilişkinizi kaç yaşında yaşadınız? *What was your age when you had your first romantic relationship?*		
17. Şimdiye kadar romantik ilişki içinde olduğunuz biriyle cinsel birlikteliğiniz oldu mu? *Have you ever had sexual relations with a romantic partner?*	Evet *Yes*	Hayır *No*
	17.a. Evet ise, kaç yaşında? *If yes, what was your age?* ………………….	

18. Şimdiye kadar herhangi bir grup çalışmasına katıldınız mı? *Have you ever participated in a group work before?*	Evet *Yes*	Hayır *No*
	18.a. Evet ise, hangi konuda? *If yes, what was the topic?* ……………………… 18.b. Evet ise, kaç tane? *If yes, how many?* ……………………………… 18.c. Evet ise, kaç yaşında? *If yes, what was your age?* ……………………………..	
19. Şu anda psikoterapiye gidiyor musunuz veya psikolojik danışmanlık alıyor musunuz? *Are you currently going to psychotherapy or seeking counseling?*	Evet *Yes*	Hayır *No*

THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Bu grup çalışmasının bir parçası olmak sizin için nasıl bir deneyimdi?
(What was it like for you to be a part of the group?)

- Genel bir değerlendirme yaparsanız, bu grup çalışması içindeki deneyiminizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
  (Generally, how would you describe your experiences in the group?)
- Bu grup çalışmasına katılmanın sizin için nasıl bir anlamı vardı?
  (What was the subjective meaning of your participation in the group?)
- Bu grup çalışmasına katılmış olmaktan memnun musunuz? Neden?
  (Are you content that you've participated in the group? Why?)
- Bu grup çalışmasıyla ilgili en çok sevdiğiniz/hoşlandığınız şey/şeyler ne oldu?
  (What were the thing/things that you most liked about the group?)
- Bu grup çalışmasıyla ilgili en sevmediğiniz/hoşlanmadığınız/rahatsızlık duyduğunuz şey/şeyler neler oldu?
  (What were the thing/things that you disliked/felt discomfortable about the group?)

2. Bu grup çalışmasına katılmak sizi herhangi bir şekilde etkiledi mi?
(Has your participation in the group affected you in any way?)
- Evetse, nasıl etkiledi?
  (If yes, how did it affect you?)
- Hayırsa, neden?
  (If no, why?)

3. Bu grup çalışası sizin için öğretici bir deneyim oldu mu?
(Have you learned something new from the group?)
- Evetse, ne bakımdan, ne konuda? Nasıl?
  (If yes, in what way, which topics? How?)
- Hayırsa, neden?
  (If no, why?)
- İlişkilerle ilgili? Duygularla ilgili? Şiddetle ilgili?
  (About relationships? About emotions? About violence?)

3. Bu grup çalışması sizin farkındalığınızı artıran bir deneyim oldu mu?
(Has the group increased you self-awareness in any way?)
- Kendinizle ilgili? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (About yourself? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)
- İlişkilerle ilgili? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (About relationships? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)
- Şiddetle ilgili? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (About violence? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)

4. Bu grup çalışması ilişkilerle ilgili düşüncelerinizi etkileyen bir deneyim oldu mu?
(Has the group influenced the way you think about relationships?)

- İlişkilerdeki roller, sorumluluklar? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (Roles and responsibilities in relationships? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)
- Kadın ve erkekler? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (Women and men? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)
- Şiddet? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (Violence? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)

5. Bu grup çalışması ilişkilerdeki davranışlarınızı etkileyen bir deneyim oldu mu?
(Has the group influenced the way you act in your relationships?)

- İlişkilerdeki roller, sorumluluklar? Evetse, ne bakımdan, nasıl? Hayırsa, neden?
  (Roles and responsibilities in relationships? If yes, in what way, how? If no, why?)

6. Grup çalışmasını geliştirmeye ilişkin herhangi bir öneriniz var mı?
(Do you have any suggestions for improvement?)

- Üzerinde daha fazla durulması gerektiğini düşündüğünüz konular? Neden?
  (The topics that you think should be covered more? Why?)

TRANSLATED QUOTATIONS

1. "Mesela bir şey deniyor ya burada, hemen aslında kafamda o olayın benim yaşadığım versiyonu geçiyordu, ne yaptım, ne ettim. Ben sürekli bir düşünme süreci içindeydim aslında. Bence böyle sürekli tartmak lazım hani günlük hayatımızdaki olayları, kendinizde ya da hani kendiniz yaşamıyorsanız bir başkasında." (Grup 3-02)

2. "Sürekli, hani tartışma olurken düşünüyordum ya kendi yaptığımı, ya karşımdakinin yaptığını. O yüzden bir ilişki zamanında yapmadığım derecede ilişkiyi tarttım. Normal ilişkideyken böyle yapmıyordum. Burada yaptım yani, bir ilişkideymiş gibisinden." (Grup 3-02)

3. "İnsanın kendi başına değerli olduğunu yüzüme çarpan yerleri vardı … Biraz kendi kendinin farkına var ya da ne yaptığını gör dedirten tarafları. Benim böyle hem geçmişten ders almama, hem de kendimi biraz daha tanımamı sağladı gibime geliyor." (Group0-04)

4. "Beni özellikle en çok etkileyen çalışma şey olmuştu. Gözlerimizi kapatmıştık, sınırlarımızı canlandırmıştık gözümüzde. Onları çizmiştik. O beni en çok düşündüren, en çok sarsan aslında çalışma oldu. Çünkü kendi sınırlarım, benimki ince böyle çit gibi bir şeydi, her yerinden geçilebiliyordu falan. Hani bir baktım, kendimi insanlarla karşılaştırdım falan. Ne kadar geçirgen, ne kadar esnek olduğunu görmek aslında beni biraz da rahatsız etti." (Group2-02)

5. "Canlandırmaları faydalı buluyorum, çünkü ciddiye alıp yapınca, karşıdakinin o olmadığı ve farklı birisinin olması seni biraz daha mantıklı yapıyor. Mantıklı yapınca öyle konuşuyorsun, ama öyle konuşunca da daha önce yaptığın farkları görüyorsun … Duygusallaşmıyorsun çünkü duygusallaşacak bir nedenin yok." (Group5-06)

6. "Bir ilişki içerisinde değerlendirmiyorsunuz. O esnada adrenalin olsun, yani bir kavga durumunda belki değerlendiremiyorsunuz ama burada yaptığınız çeşitli diyaloglarda karşıdaki kişinin arkadaşınız olduğunu bilerek bunu oynadığınız zaman sanki onun hareketlerini daha rahat değerlendirebiliyorsunuz. Yani evet belki buradan mantıklı karar çıkabilir, ben çocukça davranıyorum mesela kavga esnasında, kıskanırken çocukça davranıyorum, belki biraz daha düzelebilirim diyebiliyorsunuz. Normal ilişkilerde bunu demeniz çok zor, çünkü orada sadece haklı olmak var, doğruyu bulmak değil. Karşıdakini bir şekilde haklı olup bastırmak durumu giriyor bu tür kavgalarda. Burada o konuyu daha rahat öğrendim." (Group0-09)

7. "Hani gerçekten bana şeyi sorgulattı. Ben ne yapıyorum? Hani söylediğim şeyler neler? Ama hani gerçek hayatta bunu davranışlarıma ne kadar yansıtabiliyorum?" (Grup 2-02)

8. "Herkes güzel şeyler görmek ister ama bunu pratiğe aktarırken herkes başarılı olamayabiliyor. Bu noktada bana oldukça yardımcı oldu. Yani görmek istediğim şeyleri karşı tarafa yansıtıyorum." (Grup 2-09)

9. "Biri ya da bir şey hakkında konuşurken hani burada, hani yaşanmamış bir olayda, bir olayın ana şemasından konuşuyoruz ya, kesinlikle böyle olmamalı falan diyorum. Ama sonra bunu gerçekten içimde düşündüğüm zaman diyorum ki ben bunu yaptım. Hani gerçekten kendimin kesinlikle yapılmamasını gerektiğini düşündüğüm bir şeyi uzun zamandır yapıyorum ve yaptığımın hani farkında bile değilim … Önceden gerçekten hiç düşünmüyordum hani, sinirlendiysem hemen ifade ediyorum ve daha sonra özür dilerim … Hani hiçbir şeyin bahanesi yok aslında. Bana yapılsa ben çok üzülürüm. … Bunu baya düzelttim." (Grup 3-12)

10. "Hep şunu fark ettim, şunu yaptığımı, kendi istediğim şeylere odaklanıp hani ben bunu istiyorum ama bunun karşı taraf için şeyini çok fazla düşünmediğimi fark ettim. Hani bunun karşı tarafa verebileceği etkiyi." (Grup 3-12)

11. "Ben kendimi rahatlatma amacıyla şey yapardım kavga ederken, karşıdakinin hislerini çok önemsemeden konuşurdum … Bir arkadaş vardı işte burada, sevgilisinin geri zekâlı demesine çok alındığını söyledi. Ben de mesela çok böyle şeyler yaparım … Görüyorum ki bu hani çok küçük bir kelime olsa ve gerçekten bunu kast etmediğini bilse bile çok rahatsız ediyormuş gerçekten. Ben hep bir de şöyle düşünürdüm. Karşı taraf abartıyor. Yani gerçekten üzülmüyor, kırılmıyor." (Group5-03)

12. "Yaptığım şeyler tahtaya yazıldığı zaman ve ondan sonrasında şeyi de konuşuyorduk hani, karşı taraf ne hisseder. O karşı tarafın hislerini, şeylerini bu kadar canlı üzerinde konuşarak görünce ve birçok insanın söylediği şeylere evet ben de olsam böyle hissederdim deyince, kendimi bu sefer kötü hissediyorum. Bunu yaparsam evet karsıdaki de bunları hissediyormuş. İşte bunları görüyorken neden hala yapmaya devam edeyim?" (Grup 5-12)

13. "Şunun farkına vardım tabi, kusursuz ilişki olamayacağını, iyi ilişkinin kusursuzdan ziyade hani belli sınırlarda gezinen ilişki olduğunu … O ideal en üst s eviyeden biraz daha mantıklı bir, gerçekçi bir seviyeye çekildi diyebilirim." (Grup0-07)

14. "Hep samimiyetten, karşıdakini kırmaz diye düşünürdüm." (Gup5-06)

15. "Ben duyguların hep böyle top noktada kalmasını istiyordum … Ama hani uzun ciddi bir ilişkide galiba öyle olmuyor … Şu an o beklentim de yavaş yavaş azalmaya başladı, yani işte belli başlı noktalarda top noktada olabilir ama her zaman onu beklememek lazım yani. Düşmeye geçince direkt bitti artık olmuyor diyordum ben normalde o biraz daha azaldı şu an." (Grup1-02)

16. "Bir şeylerime karışılması, genel olarak zaten çok haz etmem. Ama hani kendi arkadaşlarımla bile konuştuğumda, olur böyle şeyler, abartma hani falan … İşte genel olarak insanların fikirlerinin de böyle olduğunu gördüm … Hani böyle düşünen tek ben değilim … Hani bu bir sorun, düzeltilmesi lazım." (Grup5-03)

17. "Bir terslik olduğunu biliyordum, ama ne olduğunu bilmiyordum … Çok kıskançtı … Düşünüyordum yani her ilişkide olan şey kıskançlık, yanıma bir

erkek geldiğinde tabi ki kıskanacak. Hani bahanelerle bir şekilde sürdürmeye çalışıyordum ama buraya geldikten sonra hani bu güvensiz ilişkinin tanımını çok iyi anladım." (Grup2-06)

18. "O kadar da çok, böyle sürekli vakit geçirmeye gerek yokmuş. Bağlılığı sağlayan şey o değilmiş en azından. Onu gördüm." (Grup1-12)

19. "Gün içerisinde mesela bir saati boşsa o bir saati neden bana ayırmadığını anlamıyordum mesela. Çok saçma geliyordu bana, ama burada biraz daha objektif olarak hani herkes kendi şeyinden bahsedince ben de onlara objektif olarak yaklaşmak zorundaydım. Sonuçta yargılayamazdım. Gerçekten de mantıklı gelmeye başladı, çünkü hani kişisel alan diye bir şey var. Her insanın onu o yapan zevkleri, ilgileri oluyor ve onlara zaman ayırmak gerekiyor bir noktada. Yani karşındaki sevgilin hayatının merkezi değilmiş. O tarz konularda grup arkadaşlarımın söyledikleri bana çok fazla şey kattı … Hem bu biraz da kendi ilgi alanlarımı görmemi de sağladı. Mesela o bir saatini bana ayırmadığı zaman ben bir saat sinirli bir şekilde otururdum … Şimdi böyle bir durum olursa, ben ondan bir saat isteyebilirim çünkü benim de artık hani farkındalığını kazandığım ilgi alanlarım varmış meğerse. Onlara zaman ayırmak ya da tek başıma oturup müzik dinlemek bile keyif veriyor yani." (Grup2-05)

20. "Bu sadece vurarak, bağırarak, çağırarak olacak bir şey değil. İnsanın üstünde bir şekilde kelime oyunlarıyla baskı kurmak da bir psikolojik şiddetmiş. Bunları fark etmek belki de beni böyle daha ona karşı haklı olduğumu, ya onun da çok masum olmadığını görmemi sağladı." (Grup5-05)

21. "Hani işte bu seferlik yaptı, belki bir daha yapmaz. İşte çok sinirliydi. Biraz kendinde de hata arıyor insan. Ya ben de şunu yaptım, belki bu yüzden olmuştur gibi …. Fark edemeyebiliyorsunuz aslında onun bir şiddet öğesi olduğunu. Hani burada konuştukça, düşündükçe, videoları izledikçe aslında farkına varıyorsunuz … En başından en ufak bir şiddet belirtisi gördüğüm zaman artık daha kararlı bir şekilde hayır diyebilirim diye düşünüyorum … Belki ilk o flört aşamasında biraz daha tatlı geliyor böyle şeyler, işte nerede olduğunu merak ediyor 'Neredesin? Kimlesin?', 'İşte ay beni merak ediyor' gibi düşünüyorsun ama ileride öyle olmayabiliyor aslında." (Grup2-03)

22. "Duygulara yaklaşım konusunda bir fikir değişikliği yaşadım … Duyguyu kabul etmek gibi, hani öyle bir kabullenme yaşadım ben de kendi duygularıma karşı da … Bir duygu hissettiğimde ben bazen panik olabiliyorum. O panik daha az oluyor işte." (Grup1-08)

23. "Duygusal çıkışım, o biraz abartı gözükebilecek üzülmelerimin sinirlenmelerimin ya da sevinmelerimin, grupta konuşurken aslında başka insanlarda da olduğunu gördüm. O kendimde çok kötü, bana yük gibi olan şeyi başkalarında da görünce az da olsa normalleşiyor ve o yük biraz benden uzaklaşmış oluyor. Yani benden uzaklaşınca da onun ne olduğunu daha net olarak görmüş oluyorum. O interaktifliğin, insanların ilişki konusundaki fikirlerini duymanın öyle güzel bir yanı oldu." (Grup1-03)

24. "Bence herkesin erkek olduğu bir durumda insan ötekini bir kendisi gibi göremeyebiliyor. Sanki yapay bir şeymiş gibi, farklı birisiymiş gibi, insan değilmiş gibi bir an için insanda aklında hayal edebiliyor. Ama böyle bir ortamda onun da benden bir farkı yokmuş diyebiliyor." (Grup2-11)

25. "İnsanlar zaten ilkokuldan beri daha çok kendi hemcinsinin olduğu ortamlarda vakit geçiriyor. Üç aşağı, beş yukarı yani. En azından ben öyle olduğunu düşünüyorum gözlemlerimden yola çıkarak. Zaten kendi cinsinin düşündüklerini ya da daha çok yatkın olduğu bu hareketleri, olguları az çok zaten biliyor. Bizim çalışma grubumuzda diğer karşı cinsin farklı düşünceleri, olaya nasıl yaklaştığını gözlemlemek bence çok büyük bir şans." (Grup2-09)

26. "Diğer tarafın ne düşünebileceğini az çok birlikte olduğunuz bir ortamda anlayabilirsiniz … Sırf kadın ya da sırf erkek olsak bu kadar faydalı olamazdı gibi geliyor bana. Genelde hani erkek daha baskın, kadın daha böyle daha naif olan taraf diye bir düşünce olduğu için, sanki biz hep burada naifler böyle kendi kendimize konuşacaktık. Orada onlar konuşacaktı gibi oluyor. Ama aslında hani böyle iki tarafın da baskın ya da naif olabileceğini burada konuşarak anlıyoruz." (Grup2-03)

27. "Bize göre her zaman her şeyin suçlusu erkekler. Yani bütün erkekler aynı (gülüyor). Hayır şaka yapıyorum ama bu durum oluşturdu işte. Yani söylerdik işte 'Ya biz çok iyiyiz. Her şeyi yapıyoruz. Yaranamıyoruz' falan, ama burada böyle bir şey olmadı gerçekten." (Group2-04).

28. "Hep bu, ataerkil yapısından geliyor buradaki erkeklerin büyük bir kısmı. Ataerkil düşüncenin yapısı aslında bizim bilincimize işliyor. Biz onu kontrol altına alıyoruz toplum içerisine girdiğimiz zaman, okuyarak, hayatımıza uygulayarak, ama bu bizim bilincimize işliyor ve olmadık yerde ortaya çıkıyor zaten. Burada da böyle olabilirdi büyük ihtimalle. Siz olmasanız, hiç kadın olmasa mesela, daha ataerkile kayabilirdi. (Pilot0-09)

29. "Çok cesaretlendim genel olarak. Bazen şey yapıyordum, çok abartıyorum ben kesin, bu çok büyük bir sorun değil, işte ben hep kendimi düşündüğüm için böyle yapıyorum. Sonra hayır, bu bir sorunmuş … Konuşmayı ben aslında çok deniyorum … İşte çok özür dilerim, tamam bundan sonra düzelecek falan. Bir şey olmuyor sonra." (Grup5-03)

30. "Yani ben ilişkim iki sene önce başladığında erkek arkadaşım bütün sosyal hayatını bitirmişti … Bana şunu diyebilmeye başlamıştı, 'Ben gitmiyorum ama hani sen niye gidiyorsun? Ben bu fedakarlığı yapıyorum sen de yap'. Ben de uzun bir süre onun baskısı altında yaşamıştım. Sosyal hayatımda çok pasifleşmiştim. Sonra bunun çok farkına vardım, hani sırf o yaptığı için ben kendi hayatımı bitirmek zorunda değilim, kendi benliğimden çıkmak zorunda değilim …. Öyle yani birçok şeyi kısıtladım kendimde. Bunları fark ettim … Çok daha açık sözlü olmaya başladım. Yani bir şeyleri biraz daha üstü kapalı söylüyordum, ima ediyordum ama buraya geldikten sonra çok daha açık bir şekilde konuşmaya başladım. Rahatsız olduğum bir şey varsa söylemeye başladım … Zaten ayrılmamı sağlayan da buydu. Yoksa ayrılamazdım da." (Grup2-06)

31. "Ben yapabilirim sen yapamazsın moduna geçti. Onun üstüne ben rahatsız olduğum için ayrılmak istedim … Hatta ayrıldığımızda da ben açıkladım, bu yüzden istemiyorum falan dedim. Bana dedi ki 'Aklına başkaları mı girdi?'. Böyle bir tepki aldıktan sonra dedim yani zaten ne konuşayım ki ben daha fazla." (Grup5-05)

32. "Sanırım önceden yaptığı şeyler sevgi çatısı altına çok daha rahat girebiliyordu. Benim hayırımı dinlemediğini aslında burada fark ettim, benim

arkadaşlarımın çok da önemli olmadığını ama onun arkadaşlarının önemli olduğunu … Onunla daha çok zaman geçirmemi istiyor çünkü beni özlüyor falan şeklinde çok düşünerek bunları geri itmiştim hani. Bunun aslında senin değerinden, insan olma değerinden kaybettirdiğini çok görmezden geliyormuşum … Zaten üçüncü haftasında falan ayrıldık sanırım …. Kendime ilişki konusundaki güvenimin arttığını hissediyorum. Yani ne adım atacağımı bilerek ilerlermişim gibi geliyor ya da daha kendimi sorgulayarak ilerlermişim gibi geliyor. Bu daha sağlıklı ilişkilerimin olacağını hissettiriyor bana." (Grup0-04)

33. "Açıkladım, yani ben seviyorum kendimi bu şekilde, 'senin de beni bu şekilde beğenmeni isterim. Hani aslında bakarsan bunların bir önemi yok o kadar, dış görüntüm evet önemli ama hani bu yüzümdeki takı aslında o kadar de büyük bir faktör olmamalı' …. 'Bu benim hayatım, o kadar da karışamazsın. İki yıldır birlikteyiz ve hani birbirimize karşı duygularımız var ama hani o kadar da değil. Ben sana o kadar karışmıyorum. Ne yapmak istiyorsan yapabilirsin, ilişkiye zarar vermediği sürece, bana zarar vermediği sürece' … Başka konuştuğumuz konu da onun bana nasıl konuştuğu, bana nasıl davrandığıydı. Hani önceden bana çok sert konuşurdu, bana aşağılama gibi şeyleri vardı, hani böyle tam açık değil ama böyle alttan. İşte onlar konuşuldu, 'Bana böyle konuşmanı istemiyorum. Ben sana saygı gösteriyorum, ben sana asla böyle kırıcı laflar söylemem. Sen de yapma' …. Şimdi böyle yumuşak kendini anlatıyor, benim yaptığım gibi." (Group5-09)

34. "Kendimi ifade edebildim o anda. Hani istemediğimi belirttim. Onu kırmadan ya da ona kendini kötü hissettirmeyecek bir şekilde söyledim ama ne istediğimi bildim o anda ve onu karşıdakine aktardım … Hani kesinlikle herhangi bir şeye zorunda bırakılmadım, maruz bırakılmadım. O konuda çok iyi hissettim yani gerçekten." (Grup2-05)

35. "20 yaşından sonra erkekler biraz daha şey oluyorlar, baskıcı demiyim ama istekleri artıyor ve reddedildikleri zaman kırılıyorlar, üzülüyorlar, garip tepkiler veriyorlar. Ben de bir yerden sonra bundan sıkıldığım için, tamam hani keyfin bilire döndü olay … Kendi keyfim ya da zevkimi çok düşünmemeye başladım … Ama son 2-3 sefer yine aynı şeyle karşılaştım ve bu sefer net bir şeydeydim, hayır, yani bu sefer hayır gibi bir şeydi … Kendine çok değer veren veya çok önemseyen bir insan değildim. Ama bunun hani iyi bir özellik olmadığını fark ettim." (Grup4-05)

36. "Dedim ki mesela beni rahatsız eden bir şey … Hani o rahatsızlığımla ilgili konuşmak istiyorum, beni rahatlatacağını düşünüyorum dedim." (Grup1-03)

37. "Bundan önce sürekli hani görmezden geliyordum bütün sorunları … Normalde beni rahatsız edebilecek bir olay varken yokmuş gibi davranıyordum. Artık onları nasıl ele alacağımı biliyorum. Kendimi nasıl açıklayacağımı biliyorum … Bir keresinde oturdum ve sakin sakin, sorunun kaynağı bu, çözümü bu. Senden beklediğim tavır buydu. Senden beklediğim tavrı alamadığım için hayal kırıklığına uğradım. Böyle hepsini teker teker anlattım … Önceden hani sinirimi görmezden geldiğim için farkında olmadan kendime çok fazla zarar verdim … Artık dile getirebilmenin verdiği bir güven var. Kendimi ifade edebiliyorum. Hani bu çok büyük bir özellik benim için … Artık bir sorun olduğu zaman nasıl çözebileceğimizi biliyoruz.

Birbirimizin duygularına nasıl yaklaşmamız gerektiğini artık çok iyi biliyoruz." (Group2-13)

38. "Karakterin dandik mi o tarz bir şey kullandı. Ben aslında çok sinirlendim ama hiçbir şey demedim o an çok sinirlendiğim için. Sonraki gün konuştum onunla. Bu benim için büyük bir adımdı. Genelde konuşmam, laf sokarım." (Grup2-07)

39. "Ben öfkelendiğimde, işte senin yüzünden hiçbir şey yapamıyorum dediğimde, o da mesela bana sinirleniyordu. Gidiyordu. O gittiği zaman hiçbir şeyimi daha da çok yapamıyordum sinirlendiğim için … Burada öğrendikten sonra gidiyorum, bir sorun var diyorum. O da ne oldu falan diyor, ondan sonra ben sorunu söylüyorum. O da hatasının nerede olduğunu bulmaya çalışıyor, konuşuyoruz bunu. Benim hatam varsa bunu direkt söylüyor. Ondan sonra üzerine konuşuyoruz. Konuşunca o olay belki çözülüyor, belki çözülmüyor ama ben bir hani sinirimi biriktirmemiş olduğum için patlama gibi bir şey olmuyor … Tabi böyle olunca ben kendim sinirlenmediğim için işlerimi de halledebiliyorum … Mutlu oluyorum, çünkü diğer şeylerim etkilenmiyor." (Group3-08)

40. "Artık öfkelendiğimde düşünüyorum hani, 'Acaba ben buna mı öfkelendim, yoksa altına başka bir sebep mi var da buna mı yansıdı?' diye. Bu açıdan benim için çok faydalı oldu. Biraz daha sakinleştiğimi fark ettim ... Hani düşününce aslında ona sinirli olmadığımı fark ettim genelde. Hani hep böyle en ufak bir şeyde patlıyormuşum aslında." (Grup2-03)

41. "Sakin düşünebilme yetisi buradan, belki de en büyük kazanımlarımdan birisi budur." (Grup2-09)

42. "Bazen gereğinden fazla hiddetlenip insanları kırdığımı hissettiğimde öfke kontrolümün üzerine gitmemin gerektiğini düşündüm … Bağırıp çağırabileceğim konularda konuşuyorsam sesimi alçak tutmayı tercih ettim ya da direkt susmayı tercih ettim yan … Sessiz kaldığımda ve karşı taraf bunu fark ettiğinde, öfke kontrolümü, yani iradenin arttığını hissettim. Bu dedim uzun vadede bana hani genel anlamda çok şey getirecek." (Grup1-12)

43. "Ben sürekli giden bir insanım, çok aktifim, ama onun gitmesini istemiyorum. Sonra düşündüm, çok saçma yani … Ben gidiyorum, o o sırada boş. Neden o gitmesin? İşte sonra onun da girmesine bir şey demedim." (Grup3-08)

44. "Gerçekten kariyerim benim için önemli ve bunu gerçekten erkek arkadaşım da hiç aşmaz. Bu böyledir. Yarın sınavım varsa, bugün buluşulmaz ya da çok önemli bir şey olmadıkça hani benim ders çalışma programım aksatılmaz. O hiç mesela ders çalışmayı sevmeyen birisi ama onun için de gerçekten oyun oynamak arkadaşlarıyla her gece, bu çok önemli. Şunu fark ettim. Ben onu aradığım zaman oyun oynuyorsa, ya oyununu bıraksan hani benimle konuşsan diyorum. Belki benim için oyun oynamak hiç önemli bir şey değil, bırakılabilir bir şey ama onun için de ders çalışmak aynı şekilde. Aslında ona o saygıyı göstermediğimi fark ettim. Kendimce kendi saygı duyduğum şeylerde ona da saygı duyuyorum." (Grup3-12)

45. "Söylediğim veya yaptığım bir şeyin karşı taraftan çok farklı anlaşılabileceğini düşünmeye başladım … Karşı taraftaki böyle anlardan anlar mı ya biraz dönmeye başlıyor." (Grup2-10)

46. "Kimin neye alınacağını bilemezsin, ne kadar tanısan bile. Orada bir sorgulama yaşamıştım kendi kendime … Bunu değiştirdim mi kendimce, değiştirdim biraz … Direkt sordum yani, 'Arada böyle konuşuyoruz, bu seni rahatsız ediyor mu, kırıyor mu?' … Karşıdakinin sen ona anlatmadan anlamasını beklersin, böyle yapıyordum açıkçası, çünkü bazen bana çok bariz geliyordu, nasıl anlamaz. O yüzden anlamayınca da sinirleniyordum. Bunu biraz daha net ifade etmem gerektiğini düşündüm, çünkü bazen bakıyorum, diğer insanlar da anlamıyor, evet anlamaması normal." (Grup5-06)

47. "Onu sorgulamaktan ziyade, hani bu şiddet mi değil mi, bu şiddet, geç, bu değil, bitti falan şeklindeydi ve bence bu biraz önyargıydı." (Grup0-04)

48. "Benim ailem çok tutucu insanlar değildir. Ya hep böyle bir çevrede büyüdüğüm için aslında hep burada ortak consensus vardı … Sadece kendimi tasdiklemiş oldum, güç dengesi olsun, rıza olsun, cinsellik olsun. Hepsi ortaktım, okeydim zaten hepsinde." (Grup 1-11)

49. "Ben de daha önce bu konu üstüne çalışmıştım. Gözlemlerde bulunmuştum ama farklı uluslar üstüne buna benzer sorular sormuştum. İşte sizde ilişkiler nasıl başlıyor, ilişkiler nasıl devam ediyor, bu ilişki sürecini nasıl geliştiriyorsunuz tarzında." (Group0-09)

50. "Ben çok etkisi olacağını düşünmüyorum. Belki partnerimin davranışlarını etkileyebilir yani … Bir tavsiye, bir nasihat verme konusunda zorlukla karşılaştığı zaman, bana geldiği zaman bir şeyler söyleyebilirim … Benden ziyade partnerimi değiştirebilir yani bu benim öğrendiğim, benim duyduğum şeyler." (Grup0-06)

51. "Karşı tarafın verdiği bir tepki o şeyi alt üst eder muhtemelen." (Grup3-10)

52. "Ortada bir sorun varsa ve karşı taraf da bizim gibi yapıcı değilse veya bunun üzerine gidip bunu çözelim, orta yol bulalım demiyorsa, nasıl olacak? Mesela güvenli cinsel ilişkiden bahsetmiştik, hani bunu biz biliyoruz ama önemli olan karşı tarafın da bilmesi. Hani karşı tarafı nasıl ikna edeceğim, derdimi anlatacağım? … Ya biz ne kadar her şeyi düşünüp en iyisini yapmaya çalışsak da karşı tarafta bitiyor işler diye düşünüyorum." (Grup 3-06)

53. "Türkiye'de gerçekten böyle değil. Biz mesela sağlıklı iletişimden bahsediyoruz, ama maalesef çoğu yerde böyle bir iletişim kurulmuyor. Hatta çoğu insanla böyle iletişim kurulmuyor … Ama tabi güzel şeyler öğrenildi. Ama işin aslı biz bir ilişkiyi mükemmelleştirmek üzerine çalıştık. İki taraftan birinde bir sıkıntı olduğu takdirde bir diyalog hiçbir zaman mükemmel olmuyor. Biz bunun üstesinden gelmeyi pek öğrenemedik sanki." (Grup0-09)

54. "Bir kadın erkek ilişkisi var, belki bunu formülize bile edebiliriz. Hani eğer ilişkide şu şöyle olursa şöyle olur, şu olursa şöyle olur diye baya matematiksel oturtabiliriz. Ama o kadar çok parametre var ki yani insan ilişkileri arasında, sadece aslında kadın erkek ilişkileri de değil … Böyle konuşarak, analiz ederek bir şeyler çözülemeyecekmiş gibi bana göre hiçbir zaman, çünkü insanlar çok değişik. Normal bir adamın yapmayacağı şeyleri bile yapabiliyor insanlar. Yani bir sürü parametre olduğu zaman her şey çok değişken oluyor ve konuşarak sanki bir yere varamayacakmış gibi hissediyoruz." (Grup 1-11)

55. "Biraz daha böyle mantığı bir kenara bırakıp kendimi salıp böyle, sinirlenince gerçekten öfkelenebilmek, içime atma yerine öfkemi gösterebilmek ya da ağlayacaksam ağlayabilmek, güleceksem rahatça gülebilmek gibi şeyler. Yani bunu yansıtabilmek bir taraftan karşıdakine isterdim." (Grup0-06)

56. "Aşık olduğun zaman gerçekten hiçbir şey düşünmüyorsun. Belki de çok düşünürsen kendini tamamen bırakamıyor gibisin. Yani hep böyle bir mantıklı adım atayım, bir düşüneyim. Çok fazla düşününce de sanki hislerini bastırıyorsun gibi oluyor … Bir his var içimde, ya fazla düşüneceğim, böyle bir şeyler eksik kalacak ya da işte bırakacağım, her şey çorba gibi olacak." (Grup 4-10)

57. Bir bilim dalı altında incelemeyi aşkı garip geliyor. Hani biraz olmalı olmamalı. Hatta sırf bu yüzden katılıp katılmama konusunda tereddütler yaşadım. Çünkü normal mantıkla incelemenin doğru olmadığını düşünüyorum ben … İki alternatif mantık olduğunu düşünüyorum ben. Hani birinin Aristo'nun normal mantığı, sebep sonuç ilişkilerine dayanan, bir de bu sebep sonuç ilişkilerini reddeden, sanatın mantığı, şiirin mantığı. Aşkı incelerken bu şiirin mantığını kullanmayı yeğliyorum. Ama işte dediğim gibi bu öteki mantıkla, öteki perspektiften, öteki dünyada, çünkü ikisi farklı farklı dünyalar, incelediğimde bu bakış açım kaybolur mu diye tereddüttüm vardı. (Grup0-07)

58. "Bazı insanlar, sizi çok iyi tanıyordur, birkaç kelime bile söyleseniz bir olayın mahiyetini anlayabilir. Ama hani belki ciddiyetini kavratmak için böyle ekstrem hadiseler de yaşanması gerekebilir zaman zaman … Atıyorum işte tabağı, çanağı mı kırmam lazım mesela, bu olayın ciddiyetinin anlaşılması için, yoksa daha işte tatlı bir akşam yemeğinde olay çözüme kavuşturulabilir mi gibi … Bir şeyleri gerçekten mesela sinirlendiğiniz zaman kırabilirsiniz. Hani öyle insanlar tanıdım mesela tartışınca dolap kapısını kıran, kapağını kıran, böyle insanlar tanıdım. Bu insanlar da kötü insanlar değildi. Çok iyi insanlardı. Sadece bu öfkelerini ifade etme biçimleriydi." (Grup0-03)

59. "Mükemmel bir reaksiyon. Şiddet çok net bir iletişim yöntemi. Ben erkek arkadaşıma bir şiddet gösterdiğimde, bu onun güç hiyerarşisinde altta kaldığı bir çizgi olmuyor, ama benim gösterdiğim bir tepki oluyor. Mesela aynısını o da bana gösterebilir bundan bir 15 gün sonra veya 1 ay sonra. Ben hiçbir şekilde onu ezmek için bir şiddet göstermiyorum. Tamamen benim kendi reaksiyonum, sinirle, 'Ya sen ne yapıyorsun!' diye gittiğim bir şey oluyor… İki insan birbiriyle bir ilişki yaşıyorsa bu ilişkide kozlar çok açık olmalı. Hayatı birleştiriyorsanız siz, bir noktada gerçekten çok sinirlendiyseniz bence inanılmaz bağırabilmelisiniz … Şunu diyebilmelisiniz, 'Ben bunu seni acıtmak için yaptım'. Biraz dürüst ve açık olmak gibi." (Grup5-07)

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