Chapter 10: Managing Relationship Challenges

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

10.1 Identify and explain the challenges that individuals involved in interpersonal relationships must navigate to be successful.

10.2 Describe the issues that constitute the dark side of interpersonal communication and those that constitute the dark side of interpersonal relationships.

10.3 Explain the process of relational de-escalation and termination, including strategies for terminating and recovering.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Relationship and Communication Challenges

Learning Objective 10.1: Identify and explain the challenges that individuals involved in interpersonal relationships must navigate to be successful.

   A. Violating Expectations
      1. Understanding Relational Expectations and Violations
         a. Socially Based Expectations
            i. People have social expectations for what it means to be a particular type of partner (e.g., husband, girlfriend, friend).
            ii. Violations of socially based expectations arouse uncertainty and produce emotional reactions such as hurt and anger.
         b. Relationship-Specific Expectations
            i. People develop implicit and explicit expectations specific to their relationship.
            ii. Implicit understandings represent an unspoken compact between the partners about the relationship and each other.
            iii. Explicit understandings are stated compacts and agreements.
            iv. A failure event or transgression is an incident marked by the breaking of a relational understanding or agreement.
            v. Effective management of a failure event can clarify expectations as well as the relationship.
         c. Severity
            i. Failure events vary in their severity and impact on relationships.
            ii. Failure events can include relational transgressions, such as sexual transgressions, nonsexual involvement with others, deception, flirting, betraying a trust, breaking a promise, continued attachment to former partners, or failing to return affection.
            iii. Relationships can be strengthened by discussing relational expectations and violations and seeking to understand your partner's assessment of the severity of any violation.

2. **Responding with Discussion**
   a. Failure events follow a specific pattern of interaction that involves specific decisions.
      i. Has a failure event actually occurred?
      ii. Does this transgression violate the culture's inherent moral code?
      iii. Did both parties agree to and understand the rule?
      iv. Was the rule appropriate and acceptable?
   b. The decision to complain or reproach a partner should be driven by desire to clarify relational expectations or to avoid the failure event in the future by modifying the partner's behaviors.
   c. A **reproach** is a message that a failure event has occurred and may be conveyed directly or indirectly.
      i. Reproaches vary from aggravating (threatening and severe) to mitigating (mild).
      ii. The nature of the reproach affects the account (the response to the reproach).
      iii. If a person knows he or she has failed to live up to an expectation, he or she may self-initiate an account.
   d. **Accounts** are responses to reproaches, and these may be in the form of apologies, excuses, justifications, or denials or may not come at all.
      i. In providing an account to another, you should examine your culpability and adopt an other-oriented perspective.
      ii. Once an account has been received, reproachers must decide whether they find the account acceptable and whether they consider the issue resolved.

3. **Responding with Forgiveness**
   a. Vincent Waldron and Douglas Kelley offer seven steps to achieving forgiveness:
      i. Confront the transgression.
      ii. Manage emotion.
      iii. Engage in sense making.
      iv. Seek forgiveness.
      v. Grant forgiveness.
      vi. Negotiate values and rules.
      vii. Transition, monitor, maintain, or renegotiate.
   b. Whether forgiveness is achieved is ultimately dependent on a number of factors, such as personality (including the ability to empathize), the quality of the relationship, the nature of the transgression (its severity), sincere acknowledgment of responsibility, and the perceived intentionality and selfishness of the transgressor.
   c. Deciding to forgive is also affected by the responses provided by our confidants.
   d. Forgiving is more likely when these third parties help us gain a new perspective on the transgression, provide practical advice, and encourage us to forgive our partner.

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
Improving Your Communication Skills: Trait Forgiveness
This feature includes a scale for students to assess their trait forgiveness. Have students independently complete the scale. Afterward, have students reflect individually on which scores could be improved and identify bullet points about specific improvements that could be made.

3c

4. Responding with Retaliation
   a. Retaliation involves an attempt to hurt the partner in response to the hurt she or he has caused.
   b. Retaliation behaviors can include aggressive communication, active distancing, manipulation attempts, contacting a rival, and violence.
5. Examining a Model of Forgiveness Responses
   a. The model helps to explain why a severe offense in an unsatisfying relationship is likely to evoke retaliation, whereas a severe offense in a valued relationship is likely to evoke a conditional response, granting forgiveness on a trial basis.
   b. Whether that relationship will continue is probably dependent on whether the victim has alternative relationships available.

4a

B. Challenging Communication: Addressing Grief and Delivering Bad News
   1. When talking with someone who is grieving, socially decenter and think about how you would like to be treated.
      a. Apply confirming listening skills, provide support, and engage in comforting communication.
   2. Another challenge is delivering bad news, which tends to create stress in both the messenger and recipient.
      a. Bad news is information that is unknown but relevant to the recipient and that the messenger believes will have negative repercussions.
      b. Four strategies occur when doctors deliver bad news to patients: direct, indirect, comforting, and empowerment.
      c. In one study of doctors delivering bad news to patients, researchers found satisfaction for each message depended on the content and the manner in which it was presented.

4b

C. Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships (LDRs)
   1. The Nature of the Separation
      a. Each long-distance relationship requires specific maintenance strategies to be successfully managed.
      b. While temporary separation requires some adjustment and management by the partners, permanent physical separation produces different expectations, interactions, and relational management strategies.
      c. Other separations may be by choice and may raise questions about relational commitment.
   2. Effects of Time Between Visits
      a. How often partners are able to get together face to face also affects the impact of the physical distance.
      b. Sometimes partners are relatively close geographically but limited in how often they can get together.

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c. Research has indicated that people who are in long-distance romantic relationships but who are ==able to get together at least once a week can maintain relationships similar to those between people who are physically close.==
   d. This distance may make it easier to maintain an idealized image of a romantic relationship when you do not spend as much time with your partner.
      i. Researchers Laura Stafford and James Reske found that ==couples in long-distance premarital relationships had less communication but greater satisfaction and higher expectations of the likelihood of marriage.== prison
      ii. ==Couples who are apart have fewer facts about their partners to get in the way.==
3. Costs and Rewards
   a. ==Social exchange theory== offers one way to analyze the survival of a long-distance relationship.
   b. ==Distance adds to the costs of maintaining a relationship: monetary costs and time involved in commuting and the disruption of normal routines.==
   c. ==These costs are weighed against the rewards of how well the relationship meets needs and expectations.==
   d. Some relationships continue for a lifetime, even with little face-to-face time, because the rewards of interacting far exceed any costs.
4. Tensions Created by LDRs
   a. Tensions may arise when one person tries to maintain both long-distance and proximal relationships.
   b. Long-distance couples also create tensions when they try so hard not to waste their time together that they over-plan activities, discussion topics, and even sex.
   c. ==The more open and honest the communication, the more similar your long-distance relationship will be to a proximal relationship.==

4c D. Relationships That Challenge Social Norms
   1. ==When social norms are violated,== partners feel social pressure to conform or ==risk being ostracized.==
   2. ==Partners in intercultural relationships== face the challenge of communicating and interacting effectively and ==may also confront bias.==
   3. Finding similarities in culture and values is one way to offset conflicts associated with differences.
      a. Gay and lesbian relationships often face strong social hostility but may be ==supported by social networks.==
      b. Nonsexual relationships between heterosexuals and homosexuals may be influenced by the sexual orientation of one of the participants.

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
Improving Your Communication Skills: Friends with a Difference
This feature asks students to think about friends they know or imagine a friendship with someone who is from each of the following groups: (a) someone at least ten years older than you; (b) someone from a country where people speak a different language than you; (c) someone with a different sexual orientation; (d) someone of a different race; and (e) someone of a different religion. After students to think of a person for each category, and have them work with a partner to discuss the questions provided in this feature.

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II. The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

Learning Objective 10.2: Describe the issues that constitute the dark side of interpersonal communication and those that constitute the dark side of interpersonal relationships.

5a

    A. Deception

        1. Mark Knapp determined that different lies have different stakes.

        2. According to **interpersonal deception theory**, individuals intentionally and strategically manipulate information to achieve some goal, while others listen and evaluate the truthfulness of that information.

            a. To avoid being caught, deceivers implement deception strategies and monitor listeners' responses.

            b. Listeners might accept the deception without pause, express skepticism, or blatantly challenge the deception.

            c. Each listener reaction lets the deceiver know his or her next course of action.

5a1

        3. Deception by Omission (Concealment)

            a. We can present information and leave out information in such a way as to intentionally mislead the listener.

            b. We can also intentionally hold back some of the information another person has requested or that you are expected to share.

            c. **Deception by omission (concealment)** might be considered a failure event for violating relational expectations.

        4. Deception by Commission (Lying)

            a. **Deception by commission (lying)** is the deliberate presentation of false information.

            b. **White lies** typically involve only a slight degree of falsification that has a minimal consequence.

            c. **Exaggeration** or embellishing the facts can also be used.

            d. **Baldfaced lies** are outright falsifications of information intended to deceive the receiver and have more impact on the behavior of those that hear them than the other types of deception.

            e. The emotional impact of the deception is related to the importance of the relationship, the importance of the information, and the importance people place on honesty.

5a2

        5. Reasons for Deception

            a. Two general categories for reasons for lying include being altruistic and being self-serving.

            b. Altruistic motivation comes from our concerns about not hurting others.

            c. Self-serving motivation comes from our concerns about our personal gain or to avoid undesirable consequences.

            d. These categories include a number of specific reasons for deception:

                i. To gain resources (material resources or intangible goals)

                ii. To avoid harm or loss of resources (preventing another's negative reaction or to save resources)

                iii. To protect one's self-image

                iv. For entertainment

                v. To protect another person's resources, self-image, or safety

5a3   6. Effects of Deception
              a. Incorrect decision making or actions
              b. Harm to relationships
              c. Loss of trust
              d. Harm to innocent bystanders
              e. Additional harm of punishment, embarrassment, guilty conscience, or damaged reputation

5b   B. Communication That Hurts Feelings
              1. When people discover that they have been deceived, they usually feel betrayed, foolish, angry, and/or hurt.
              2. Disconfirming responses are messages that hurt listeners by undermining their sense of self-esteem.
              3. As the perceived intentionality of hurtful messages increases, so does the emotional pain.
5b1   4. Researchers have identified three general categories of reactions to messages that hurt:
                      a. **Active verbal responses** are reactive statements such as counterattacks, self-defense statements, sarcastic statements, and demands for explanations.
                      b. **Acquiescent responses** include crying, conceding, or apologizing.
                      c. **Invulnerable responses** include ignoring the message, laughing, or being silent in an attempt to show that the message did not hurt.
              5. Research indicates that people are more hurt by messages from family members than by nonmembers and that romantic relationships are more damaged by hurtful messages than family, nonfamily, or nonromantic relationships are.
              6. The way the message is conveyed also affects its impact, with harsh, abrasive messages creating greater hurt.
              7. The quality of the relationship at the time of the message also affects people's perceptions of a hurtful message.
              8. Hurtful messages are probably unavoidable in interpersonal relationships, but how you respond and manage the impact of those messages makes the difference in the level of satisfaction and happiness you feel in your relationships.
              9. A strong other-orientation is needed if you are going to monitor the impact of your messages on others.
5c   C. Jealousy
              1. **Envy** is a discontented feeling that arises from a desire for something someone else has. **Jealousy** is a reaction to the threat of losing a valued relationship.
5c1   2. **Cognitive jealousy** is thoughts about the loss of a partner, reflections on decreases in the partner's time for the other, and analyses of behaviors or occurrences deemed suspicious. **Emotional or affective jealousy** includes the feelings of anger, hurt, distrust, worry, or concern aroused by the threat of losing a relationship. **Behavioral jealousy** represents actions taken to monitor or alter a partner's jealousy-evoking activity.
              3. Sometimes concern about loss of the relationship arises because of the presence of a third party, but it can also result from outside factors that jeopardize the relationship.

4. Using Jealousy as a Tactic
   a. Among the tactics people use to make another person jealous are distancing, flirtation façade, and relational alternatives.
   b. The use of jealousy as a tactic to improve a relationship by getting the partner to pay more attention to you or to display greater commitment is risky.

5c2 5. Managing Jealousy
   a. Concern about the possible loss of, or a significant change in, a relationship is neither inappropriate nor unusual.
   b. Jealousy reflects uncertainty about our value and the relationship.
   c. A jealous partner has a number of options, including:
      i. Accept or ignore the change in the relationship.
      ii. Seek information.
      iii. Express the jealousy.
      iv. Seek to identify and repair any relational problems.
   d. Calmly expressing feelings, presenting oneself in a positive manner, and expressing caring are viewed more positively than displaying violence, being insulting or threatening, or confronting a rival.
   e. Expressing jealousy can arouse uncertainty in the partner, particularly when the jealousy is expressed indirectly through crying or acting hurt or depressed.
   f. Sensitivity and responsiveness to both partners' commitment to the relationship can help avoid or minimize jealousy.

5d D. Unwanted Attention
   1. Obsessive Relational Intrusion (ORI)
5d1
   a. **Obsessive relational intrusion (ORI)** describes repeated invasion of a person's privacy by a stranger or acquaintance that desires or assumes a close relationship.
   b. Unlike stalking, ORI is usually annoying and frustrating but not threatening.
   c. ORI is marked by behaviors such as unregulated self-disclosing; trying to get the other person to disclose; offering unwanted gifts, notes, or calls, and other expressions of affection; arranging coincidental meetings; and expressing a desire for physical contact.
   d. There is a fine line between trying to hang on to or pursue a relationship and becoming obsessive.
   e. It is the repeated and sustained display of these behaviors after rejection that indicates ORI.
   2. Stalking
   a. **Stalking** involves repeated, unwelcome intrusions that create concern for personal safety and fear in the target.
   b. Stalking can be thought of as an extreme form of ORI.
   c. Three recommendations for addressing ORI and stalking:
5d2
      i. Harden the target: Make it harder for someone to contact you.
      ii. Keep others appraised: Let family, friends, coworkers, and others know about your situation.
      iii. Avoidance: After telling the intruder or stalker to leave you alone, you should avoid any further contact.

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5e

E. Relational Violence
1. **Relational violence** refers to the range of destructive behaviors aimed at other people, including aggressiveness, threats, violent acts, and verbal, psychological, and physical abuse.
2. Sociologist Michael Johnson separates partner violence into three types:
   a. Intimate terrorism
   b. Violent resistance
   c. Situational couple violence
3. Males are responsible for almost all intimate terrorism, females for violent resistance, and both men and women engage in situational couple violence, which is the most frequent form of relational violence.
4. Acts of relational violence are a form of communication.
5. Acts of relational violence communicate anger, frustration, lack of control, and disregard for a partner and the relationship while instilling fear and engendering retaliation, counterattacks, and subversion.
6. Intimate violence is not really about power or gender, but rather reflects a process of face-threat, negative emotional arousal, conflict, emotional intensification, attack, and self-protection, building to frustration with irresolvable conflicts and provoking further aggressive communication and acts of violence.
7. Avoiding relational violence is a strong reason for improving interpersonal communication skills.

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
#communicationandtechnology: Cyberstalking, Cyberbullying, and Partner Surveillance
This feature presents research on the dark side of electronically mediated communication (EMC), focusing on cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and partner surveillance. General rules about how students can protect privacy are also included. Hold a class discussion about how students protect their privacy from others.

next
time...

III. Relationship De-Escalation and Termination
Learning Objective 10.3: Explain the process of relational de-escalation and termination, including strategies for terminating and recovering.
A. Signs of Relationship Problems
1. Because each stage in a relationship has unique communication qualities, specific verbal and nonverbal cues can tip us off when a relationship begins to de-escalate.
2. John Gottman identified four categories of communication behavior that indicate increasing problems in a marriage:
   a. Criticisms
   b. Contempt
   c. Defensive behaviors
   d. Stonewalling

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
Relating to Diverse Others: Women's and Men's Responses to Relationship Challenges
This feature presents research on the differences between men and women in their management of relationship challenges. Hold a class discussion in which students talk about how, if at all, they have noticed sex differences in their own relational experiences.

B. Repair and Rejuvenation
   1. The nature of the problem, the stage of the relationship, and an assortment of relational qualities all affect the success of repair efforts.
   2. Professional counseling might be an important option.
   3. The ability to rejuvenate a relationship depends on the degree to which partners recognize the reasons for relational decay and the level of their interest in rejuvenating the relationship.
   4. Rejuvenation is usually conducted through implicit moves rather than direct discussion.
C. The Decision to End a Relationship
   1. If you choose to change the level of intimacy in a relationship, consider your goals.
   2. The de-escalation and termination of a relationship is not inherently bad.
   3. Not all relationships are meant to endure.
   4. Ending a relationship may be a healthy move if the relationship is harmful or does not provide confirmation of our sense of self.
   5. Breaking up an intimate relationship is hard because of the degree to which we become dependent on the other person to confirm our sense of self.
   6. In **bilateral dissolutions**, both parties are predisposed to ending the relationship and simply need to sort out the details.
   7. In **unilateral dissolutions**, when one party wants the relationship to continue, the person who wants to end the relationship often tries to persuade his or her partner to break up.
D. How Relationships End
   1. Fading Away
      a. Sometimes a relationship ends by **fading away**—the two partners just drift further and further apart, spend less time together, and decrease their self-disclosure.
   2. Sudden Death
      a. Some relationships have an abrupt and unplanned ending of **sudden death**, frequently due to a single precipitating event.
   3. Incrementalism
      a. In between fading away and sudden death lies **incrementalism**—the systematic progression of a relationship through each of the de-escalation stages.

E. Reasons for De-Escalating and Terminating
   1. One researcher found that most people attribute breakups to one of three main causes:
      a. "Faults" are problems with personality traits or behaviors that one partner dislikes in the other and are the most commonly named cause. `beliefs, attitudes, values`
      b. "Unwillingness to compromise" represents a variety of failings on the part of one or both partners, including failure to put enough effort into the relationship, a decrease in effort, or failure to make concessions for the good of the relationship.
      c. "Feeling constrained" reflects one partner's desire to be free from the commitments and constraints of a relationship. `back to personal`
   2. A variety of other factors may contribute, such as loss of interest, desire for independence, and conflicting attitudes about issues affecting the relationship.
   3. Just as there are behavioral rules for making and maintaining friends, there are behaviors that will most certainly cost you a friendship: `Friendships`
      a. Acting jealous or being critical
      b. Discussing confidences with others
      c. Not volunteering in time of need
      d. Not trusting or confiding in your friend
      e. Criticizing in public
      f. Not showing positive regard
      g. Not standing up for your friend in his or her absence
      h. Not being tolerant of your friend's other friends
      i. Not showing emotional support
      j. Nagging your friend
   4. Reasons for ending same-sex friendships include physical separation, replacing old friends with new ones as circumstances change, a change in attitudes about a friend's behavior or personality, and one friend's dating activity or romantic relationships.
   5. Close friendships are better able to withstand change, uncertainty, and separation than are casual friendships. `same with romantic relationships`

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
Relating to Diverse Others: Empathy and Sexual Orientation
This feature presents a personal story written by one of the authors about an experience that he had at a call center where he was challenged to display empathy to someone who was different from him. Hold a class discussion about instances when students were challenged to display empathy toward someone who was different from them.

F. The Relational Dissolution Process `see textbook`
   1. Relationship scholar Steve Duck has created a model that emphasizes the phases or processes tied to relational dissolution decision making and related social interactions.
   2. Intrapsychic Phase
      a. In the first phase of Duck's model, the **intrapsychic phase**, we privately evaluate our partner's behaviors.
      b. Social exchange theory predicts that in this phase we would evaluate the relationship's costs and rewards and end relationships when they cost us more than they reward us.

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    c. From time to time we all become frustrated with a relationship, and perhaps even enter the intrapsychic phase.

    d. After evaluating our relationship in the intrapsychic phase, we might pass another threshold where we feel compelled to move to the next phase.

3. Confidant Phase

    a. In the **confidant phase**, we discuss and evaluate the relationship, our concerns, and options with someone other than our partner.

    b. Confidants may act as mediators, encouraging reconciliation and suggesting ways to repair the relationship.

4. Dyadic Phase

    a. In the **dyadic phase**, we move from internal contemplations about the relationship to discussing termination with our partner.

    b. If our partner feels challenges and intimidated, we might have to justify our thoughts and feelings about ending the relationship. *self-disclosure*

    c. Issues may be raised that cause us to choose to work on improving the relationship rather than ending it.

5. Social Phase

    a. If you and your partner agree to end the relationship, you enter the **social phase**, and members of the social network surrounding both parties are informed of and begin making the information public.

    b. You begin sharing your story about how the relationship ended, molding it to save face.

6. Grave-Dressing Phase

    a. In the **grave-dressing phase**, we cover up the hurt and pain associated with the death of the relationship.

    b. One or both partners generate public explanations and move past the relationship.

    c. Most important, they go through an internal stage of coming to acceptance of the end of the relationship.

7. Resurrection Phase

    a. During the **resurrection phase**, we review and adjust our perspectives on self, others, and relationships, while beginning the pursuit of new, meaningful relationships and reconstructing relational perspectives. *back to Chapter 2, Chapter 8*

G. Strategies for Ending Relationships

    1. Indirect Termination Strategies

        a. **Indirect termination strategies** represent attempts to break up a relationship without explicitly stating the desire to do so.

           i. Withdrawal: Withdrawal involves reducing the amount of contact and interaction without any explanation.

           ii. Pseudo–de-escalation: In pseudo–de-escalation, one partner claims that he or she wants to redefine the relationship at a lower level of intimacy but, in reality, he or she wants to end the relationship.

           iii. Cost escalation: Cost escalation is an attempt to increase the costs associated with the relationship to encourage the other person to terminate it.

2. Direct Termination Strategies
   a. **Direct termination strategies** involve explicit statements of a desire to break up the relationship.
      i. Negative Identity Management: Negative identity management is a direct statement of the desire to terminate the relationship that does not take into account the other's feelings and may include criticisms.
      ii. Justification: Justification is a clear statement of the desire to end the relationship accompanied by an honest explanation of the reasons. It may still hurt the other's feelings, but a person who uses justification does not fault the other and attempts to protect both parties' sense of self. One researcher found that most people on the receiving end like this strategy the best
      iii. De-escalation: De-escalation is an honest statement of a desire to redefine the relationship at a lower level of intimacy or to move toward ending the relationship.
      iv. Positive Tone: In using the direct strategy of positive tone, the initiator tries to affirm the other's personal qualities and worth at the same time that he or she calls a halt to the relationship.
H. Recovery Strategies
   1. Researcher Ann Weber created a list of strategies to help address grief and loss in nonmarital breakups.
      a. Express your emotions to a sympathetic listener, in a journal, or some other forum.
      b. Figure out what happened.
      c. Realize, don't idealize.
      d. Prepare to feel better.
      e. Expect to heal.
      f. Talk to others.
      g. Get some perspective.
      h. Be ready for further punishment, or maybe reward.
   2. Facing the end of a relationship that has meant a great deal to us is one of the more difficult experiences we face in our social lives. The more intimate and involved we become, the more heartbreaking the end. Regrettably, relationships do come to an end, but just as you develop skills in initiating relationships, you can develop the ability to cope effectively with their termination, and with reflection, experience personal growth.

In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion
Communication and Emotion: Assessing Your Emotional Responses to Relationship Challenges
This feature asks students to consider the emotions they experience when confronting situations with other people. Have students independently reflect on the ten relational challenges and write about the initial and subsequent emotional reactions. Then have students works in pairs to consider the questions.

<u>**In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion**</u>
Applying an Other-Orientation to Relationship Challenges
This feature includes strategies for students to apply an other-orientation when facing relationship challenges. Have students work in pairs to identify instances in which they faced a relationship challenge. Then have students consider how each strategy may be used to overcome the relationship challenge.

<u>**KEY TERMS**</u>

failure event or transgression, LO 10.1
reproach, LO 10.1
account, LO 10.1
interpersonal deception theory, LO 10.2
deception by omission (concealment), LO 10.2
deception by commission (lying), LO 10.2
white lies, LO 10.2
exaggeration, LO 10.2
bald-faced lies, LO 10.2
active verbal responses, LO 10.2
acquiescent responses, LO 10.2

invulnerable responses, LO 10.2
envy, LO 10.2
jealousy, LO 10.2
cognitive jealousy, LO 10.2
emotional or affective jealousy, LO 10.2
behavioral jealousy, LO 10.2
obsessive relational intrusion (ORI), LO 10.2
stalking, LO 10.2
relational violence, LO 10.2
bilateral dissolution, LO 10.3

unilateral dissolution, LO 10.3
fading away, LO 10.3
sudden death, LO 10.3
incrementalism, LO 10.3
intrapsychic phase, LO 10.3
confidant phase, LO 10.3
dyadic phase, LO 10.3
social phase, LO 10.3
grave-dressing phase, LO 10.3
resurrection phase, LO 10.3
indirect termination strategies, LO 10.3
direct termination strategies, LO 10.3

<u>**LECTURE TOPICS**</u>

1. What are some of the common relationship challenges that you have experienced? What management strategies have you found to be effective? What management strategies have you found to be ineffective?
2. What relational expectations do you have a tendency to bring into your relationships? How do you respond when others violate those relational expectations?
3. How has the advent of social media created relational challenges? How are online relational challenges managed differently than face-to-face relational challenges?

<u>**GROUP IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT**</u>

1. **Guest Speaker on Family Violence.** Consider inviting a guest professor or attorney who specializes in family violence to speak to your class. Depending on your students' interests, you could bring in someone knowledgeable in a particular sub-specialty in family violence—such as violence against children, sexual violence, marital or partner violence. Have this speaker talk about his or her perspective on how communication escalates problems with family violence.

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2. **Analyzing Media and Conflict.** Select an episode from a television drama, comedy, or movie that demonstrates the behaviors that can help sustain or harm a relationship. (Even an episode of a popular soap opera may be useful.) During the clip, ask students to look for instances of supportive communication, as well as instances in which communication is harmful. What were the results and outcomes of these communication behaviors? What activity or behavior preceded the episode of hurtful communication? Ask students to discuss how the situation could have been handled differently.
3. **Breaking Up.** Ask students to identify their preferred method for breakups in the past. Have students form groups based on their strategies. In each group, have students consider and list all possible positive and negative effects of that particular strategy. Encourage students to consider the effects on the initiator of the breakup, the receiver of the message, and the relationship itself. After reports from each group, lead a class discussion aimed at rank-ordering strategies from most to least humane.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Responding to Failure Events.** In a short paper assignment, ask students to identify one or more "failure events" they have experienced in their relationships. Instruct them to define "failure event," explain the type of relationship it occurred in, discuss how they handled it, and explain what the result was for the relationship. Following this account, they should evaluate the failure event using concepts and ideas from the text, including what they did well and things they could have handled differently. Because students may feel uncomfortable documenting their own failure events, give them the option of writing (without using names) about a failure event they observed in the relationship of a roommate or close friend.
2. **Interviews and Long-Distance Relationships (LDRs)**. Ask students to talk to their friends, parents, and relatives about their long-distance relationships.
   - What were the circumstances?
   - What were the outcomes?
   - How did the relationship change when the partners were close together?
   - How did it influence their relationship?
   - How has technology (e-mail and cell phones) influenced the communication between absent partners and friends?
3. **Exploring Support Groups.** Ask students to conduct some research about online support groups, particularly for people who have lost a loved one to divorce or death. In analyzing the messages within these groups, have students write a reflection in which they consider the following questions:
   - What functions do they serve?
   - Why might some people hesitate to get involved?
   - What types of activities do they pursue?
   - How long do people usually continue with the group?

REVEL WRITING EXERCISES

Journal Writing

10.1 Journal: Long Distance. Daric and Jamie are in an exclusive romantic relationship, but they have been attending different schools 300 miles apart. Soon they will be graduating and moving to the same city. What advice can you give them to help ensure the relationship survives living in the same area again?

10.2 Journal: Discovering Deception. What factors would influence your reaction to the discovery that another person had deceived you?

10.3 Journal: Ending a Relationship. How do you know when it is time to get out of a relationship?

Shared Writing: Offending Comments
Working in groups, consider a scenario in which you're having lunch with a close friend when you both observe an interracial couple sitting down to eat. Your friend makes a highly derogatory comment about the couple that offends you. What should you do? What will you do? Why?