

Trust, satisfaction high in consensual open relationships

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Credit: University of Michigan

Monogamy is considered by many to kindle commitment, trust and love, but a new University of Michigan study finds that those in nonmonogamous relationships are just as happy.

Despite the stigma, heterosexuals in consensual open relationships report high levels of [satisfaction](#) and [trust](#), as well as low levels of jealousy.

"Overall, the outcomes for monogamous and consensual nonmonogamous participants were the same—indicating no net benefit of one relationship style over another," said Terri Conley, U-M associate professor of psychology and women's studies, and the study's lead author.

Conley and colleagues conducted analyses of different relationships among participants older than age 25. The sample included 2,124 people, who responded to the quality of their relationship and partner—either one or both. The group rated relationship components: satisfaction, commitment, trust, jealousy and passionate love, which is the intense love feeling often described in new relationships.

Researchers found no differences between monogamous and consensual nonmonogamous participants in terms of satisfaction and passionate [love](#). There were differences, however, with jealousy and trust, in which the results are opposite to society's presumptions about the benefits from monogamy.

Another finding differed from people's assumptions that those in nonmonogamous relationships do not care about each other enough to be happy in their primary relationship. The study, however, showed that an

individual had more satisfaction, trust, commitment and [passionate love](#) in their primary mate than in their secondary [relationship](#).

The study's other authors include U-M researchers Jessica Matsick, Amy Moors and Ali Ziegler. The findings appear in the current issue of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

More information: Terri Conley et al. Investigation of Consensually Nonmonogamous Relationships, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (2017). [DOI: 10.1177/1745691616667925](https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616667925)

Provided by University of Michigan

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