



Relational entitlement moderates the associations between support matching and perceived partner responsiveness



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ABSTRACT

Support often fails to lead to beneficial results. One personality factor which may differentiate between individuals' responses to support is an excessive sense of relational entitlement (SRE; the perception of what one deserves within a romantic relationship). We examined SRE as a moderator of the association between support matching and daily perceived partner responsiveness (PPR). We found overall positive effects for support matching, negative effects for underprovision, and limited effects for overprovision. We also found that men (but not women) with an excessive SRE experienced a greater increase in their PPR when their supportive needs were met; additionally, both men and women with an excessive SRE experienced a greater decrease in PPR when their supportive needs were not met.

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1. Introduction

The Skillful Support Model (Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009) proposed a theoretical framework of the different factors involved in the provision of skilled support. One of these hypothesized factors was the provision of support that appropriately matches the need or wish of the recipient (Dehle, Larsen, & Landers, 2001; Horowitz et al., 2001). In our recent work (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013; see also Brock & Lawrence, 2009; Reynolds & Perrin, 2004), we demonstrated that mismatched support (and particularly, support that is underprovided) may matter as much as matched support. In the current study, we aimed to go one step further, and to explore the idea that recipients may not be equally sensitive to either matches or mismatches.

Several personality factors have been presumed to be associated with the general effects of support; these include attachment security (e.g., Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Rholes, 2001; Collins, Ford, & Feeney, 2011), self-esteem (Gleason, Iida, Shrout, & Bolger, 2008), and relational self-construal (Heintzelman & Bacon, 2015). In the current work, we aimed to examine a personality factor which has yet to be considered in conjunction with social support (or with matches/mismatches in it). Specifically, we assessed the extent to which recipients' sense of relational entitlement (SRE) moderates the effects of these matching states. To

our knowledge, though many researchers (e.g., Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2000) have examined the role of personality in close relationships, this is the first study to suggest an individual differences factor as a possible moderator of the effects of support matching.

1.1. Sense of relational entitlement

According to the agency model of narcissism in relationships, entitlement is one of the five fundamental qualities of narcissism (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Campbell et al. (2004) conceptualized general psychological entitlement as a stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others. Other researchers have expanded the concept and differentiated between three basic entitlement-related attitudes: excessive, restricted, and assertive entitlement (Kriegman, 1983; Levin, 1970; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990).

People characterized by excessive entitlement believe they deserve to have their needs and wishes satisfied regardless of others' feelings, needs, or rights, and feel comfortable behaving however they desire. Those characterized by restricted entitlement may look as if they are uncertain of their legitimate right to express their needs and receive attention. They are likely to behave in an introverted manner and in particularly modest, bashful, and cautious ways. Finally, those characterized by assertive entitlement seem to hold a healthy and adaptive sense of what response they may realistically expect from others regarding their preferences, needs and rights (George-Levi, Vilchinsky, Tolmacz, & Liberman, 2014).

We wish to suggest that excessive entitlement is the entitlement attitude most likely to be associated with strong reactions

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to the fulfillment or unfulfillment of relational expectations, and as such, may be particularly relevant when examining support matching and mismatching effects. This is in line with much of the literature pertaining to the effects of one's general sense of entitlement (e.g., Campbell et al., 2004; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Horney, 1950; Murray, 1964).

In a line of studies, Campbell et al. (2004) showed excessive entitlement to have a pervasive and largely destructive association with social behavior. For example, excessive entitlement was associated with competitive or greedy choices, selfish approaches to romantic relationships, and aggression following ego threat. Other authors have found excessive entitlement to put people at risk for emotional and interpersonal problems: it is associated with poor self-esteem, with more attachment insecurity, and with signs of emotional reactivity and instability, as manifested in neuroticism, negative mood, distress, depression, loneliness, unforgiveness, social anxiety, lack of life satisfaction and lower levels of marital adjustment and relationship satisfaction (Exline et al., 2004; George-Levi et al., 2014; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011; Zitek, Jordan, Monin, & Leach, 2010). Thus, the present study focused solely on excessive entitlement attitudes.

An individual's sense of entitlement may differ within different life contexts and thus, be specific to a certain relationship or situation (Kriegman, 1983; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). The idea of contextualized personality – i.e., that individuals' personality is often manifested in different manners within each context or social role – has gained considerable attention among personality researchers (e.g., Bleidorn & Ködding, 2013; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Dunlop, 2015; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Though the idea of contextualized personality has been examined mainly in regard to personality traits (e.g., the Big-5; Dunlop, 2015), it has also been explored with regards to more relational traits such as attachment orientations (Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011; Gillath, Hart, Nofle, & Stockdale, 2009). Whereas there are various life domains in which the sense of entitlement may be activated, it has been suggested that one particular important context is romantic relationships. Since high levels of reciprocity, commitment, intimacy and passion are distinctive characteristics of such relationships, it is only natural they should cultivate unique entitlement issues (Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). For instance, it has been suggested that excessive entitlement beliefs and values extend from, or co-occur with, proprietariness (i.e., viewing a romantic partner as a type of property) in a relationship and may result in severe violence (Hannawa, Spitzberg, Wiering, & Teranishi, 2006).

The sense of entitlement present within romantic relations has only recently begun to be studied empirically. The concept of *relational* entitlement has been defined as the extent to which an individual expects his or her relational wishes, needs, and fantasies to be fulfilled by a romantic partner (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). It also refers to a person's affective and cognitive responses to a romantic partner's failure to meet these wishes, needs, and fantasies. People with an excessive sense of relational entitlement (SRE) are more sensitive to relational transgressions and frustrations, are more vigilant to negative aspects of their partner and relationship, and have higher expectations for their partner's attention and understanding (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). As such, it seems likely that these individuals respond more strongly to the support matches and mismatches occurring within their romantic relationship.

1.2. Support within intimate relationships

Social support is a staple of close relationships (Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998; Thoits, 2010). A large body of research has documented considerable mental and physical

benefits for the perception that support is available and forthcoming (see reviews by Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000; Cohen, 1988; Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Pinquart & Duberstein, 2010; Uchino, 2004). For instance, a number of studies indicate that social support is associated with better immune functioning (e.g., Lutgendorf et al., 2005; Miyazaki et al., 2005) and deficits in social support have been found to predict future increases in depressive symptoms during adolescence (Lewinsohn, Hops, Roberts, Seeley, & Andrews, 1993; Sheeber, Hops, Alpert, Davis, & Andrews, 1997; Slavin & Rainer, 1990; Stice, Ragan, & Randall, 2004).

Whereas in childhood individuals turn mainly to their primary caregivers for support, in adulthood, they often seek help from within their committed, romantic relationships (Bowlby, 1988; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). For example, among married couples, partners are most likely to turn to each other for support in times of need (e.g., Beach, Martin, Blum, & Roman, 1993; Dakof & Taylor, 1990). Social support is also considered a key element of relationship maintenance and marital well-being (e.g., Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000; Bradbury & Karney, 2004), and availability of dyadic support predicts both individual and relational positive outcomes (e.g., Bradbury et al., 2000; Cutrona, Russell, & Gardner, 2005). Relatedly, support is associated with relationship satisfaction (e.g., Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Julien & Markman, 1991). Furthermore, the longitudinal course of marriage is strongly influenced by the extent to which couples' support transactions help them adapt to stressors and life transitions (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). For instance, people often identify lack of spousal support as a major reason for relationship dysfunction and dissolution (e.g., Baxter, 1986; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998).

Though *perception* of support availability is consistently associated with positive outcomes (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House et al., 1988), *actual* support transactions are not uniformly beneficial and may even cause harm to the recipient (e.g., Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000; Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982; Krause, 1997; Nurullah, 2012). For example, a study of breast cancer patients found enacted support to be ineffective in reducing patients' distress or promoting physical recovery (Bolger, Foster, Vinokur, & Ng, 1996). Another study found decreased adjustment following reports of support provision in examinees preparing for the New York State Bar Examination (Bolger et al., 2000).

Different explanations have been put forward for this apparent paradox. Support receipt may threaten recipients' self-esteem and sense of competence, emphasize the stressor at hand or the recipient's distress, or alternatively raise feelings of indebtedness and inequity between the partners in a relationship (Bolger & Amarel, 2007; Bolger et al., 2000; McClure et al., 2014; Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009). It has been suggested that in order to circumvent these costs (and indeed, to maximize its benefits) support must be skillfully provided and matched to the specific needs of the recipient, in terms of both quality and quantity (Rafaeli & Gleason, 2009; Rini & Dunkel Schetter, 2010).

1.3. Support matching and mismatching

A prominent conceptualization of support matching was presented in Cutrona, Cohen, and Igram's (1990) Optimal Matching Theory. This model proposes that whereas *action facilitating* support (i.e., instrumental support) is most beneficial when a recipient is coping with a controllable stressor, *nurturant* support (i.e., emotional support) is viewed as more effective for coping with uncontrollable stressors. Interestingly, only partial empirical support has been found for this theory: whereas instrumental support has been found to be associated with greater satisfaction when recipient's

control is low but their partner's control is high, emotional support was found to be associated with greater satisfaction regardless of stressor controllability (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992).

However, beyond the controllability of a situation, numerous other personal or contextual factors may influence the needs or wishes of an individual facing difficulties (e.g., one's attachment style: Collins & Feeney, 2000; one's situational level of distress: Kaniasty & Norris, 1995). Moreover, as it has been suggested that as support needs can be highly idiosyncratic, even in particular situations, it may be more pertinent to consider the support recipient's unique and subjective needs, than to attempt to infer them from the objective nature of the stressor at hand (Cutrona et al., 1990; Rini & Dunkel Schetter, 2010).

Indeed, provision of emotional support which matched recipients' subjective preferences led them to perceive their partners as more sensitive (Cutrona, Shaffer, Wesner, & Gardner, 2007), was associated with favorable relationship outcomes (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013), and finally, was linked to faster physiological recovery from a stressful situation (Priem & Solomon, 2015).

Alongside the importance of studying the effects of support matches, there is value in examining the effects of support mismatches as well. Two possible forms of mismatch are support overprovision (i.e., when recipients perceive themselves as receiving support they hadn't wished for), and support underprovision (i.e., when recipients perceive themselves as not receiving the support they had wished for; e.g., Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013; Brock & Lawrence, 2009). In a recent daily diary study of romantic couples, Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli (2013) adopted the idea of simultaneously examining support matches and mismatches, and compared each of these matching states (i.e., matching, overprovision, and underprovision) with a baseline state of no support receipt and no desire for it. They found that receipt of matched emotional (though not practical) support was associated with favorable relational outcomes. In addition, both emotional and practical support underprovision were associated with adverse relational and personal outcomes, an effect which was stronger among women. Finally, few and inconsistent effects were found for support overprovision.

These findings are consistent with other studies suggesting salubrious effects for emotional (but not practical) support matching (e.g., Cutrona et al., 2007), detrimental effects for support underprovision (e.g., Brock & Lawrence, 2009; Reynolds & Perrin, 2004), and inconsistent effects of support overprovision (Brock & Lawrence, 2009; cf., Siewert, Antoniow, Kubiak, & Weber, 2011). In the present work, we aimed to go one step further to begin exploring an individual difference factor (specifically, excessive SRE) which may moderate the response to matched or mismatched support.

1.4. Perceived partner responsiveness (PPR) as an outcome

To examine the possibility that excessive SRE moderates the effects of support matching states, we chose perceived partner responsiveness (PPR) as our relational outcome. PPR refers to the perception that one's partner understands, values, and cares for one's self and one's important needs and goals (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). PPR has been proposed as a core principle or central theme for relationship research as a whole (Reis & Clark, 2013), found to be a sensitive index of relationship functioning and satisfaction (e.g., Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006; Maisel & Gable, 2009; Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006), and found to mediate the effects of relationship behaviors (e.g., support, sexuality) on various outcomes (e.g., Fekete, Stephens, Mickelson, & Druley, 2007; Gadassi et al., 2016; Selcuk & Ong, 2013). In addition, relationships characterized by responsiveness may reduce the need for defensive reactions to real or potential failure (Caprariello &

Reis, 2011) and promote self-disclosure (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008).

PPR seems particularly relevant to the examination of social support within intimate relationships. For example, Maisel and Gable (2009) found dyadic support to be emotionally beneficial (i.e., associated with less daily negative mood, and more daily relationship quality) only when it was perceived as responsive. Selcuk and Ong (2013) found that among participants who reported low perceived partner responsiveness, received emotional support was associated with increased mortality risk. More importantly, it has been found to mediate the effect of support matching states on one's personal and relational outcomes (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013) – in a sense, serving as a key variable in the process of support's effects. In an even simpler sense, PPR can be thought of as a good proximal outcome for tapping the effects of support receipt (e.g., Debrot, Cook, Perrez, & Horn, 2012; Lemay & Neal, 2014).

PPR also seems very relevant for examining the moderating role of excessive SRE. Specifically, excessive SRE taps into individuals' general expectations regarding entitlements within their relationship, whereas PPR taps into the perceptions of whether their partners are responsive to these expectations – and as a result, fulfil their needs. Thus, we suggest that SRE would moderate the association between support matching and PPR; specifically, if individuals' expectations are excessive, they will be more reactive to relational behaviors that satisfy or frustrate these expectations. Moreover, we expect to find a direct association between SRE and PPR, as individuals with excessive expectations put themselves in a position in which they are more likely to be disappointed by their partners' lack of responsiveness to such excessive expectations.

1.5. Hypotheses

The present study was guided by the following hypotheses: (1) Emotional (but not practical) support matching will be positively associated with PPR. (2) Both emotional and practical support underprovision will be negatively associated with PPR; this finding will be stronger for women. (3) We made no directional prediction regarding either emotional or practical support overprovision, as findings in the literature have been inconsistent thus far with regards to such mismatches. (4) The associations between emotional support matching, or either emotional or practical support mismatching states and PPR will be stronger for those individuals characterized by excessive SRE. (5) Even after adjusting for the support matching states, individuals characterized by an excessive SRE will report lower levels of PPR.

SRE is associated with attachment (Tolmacc & Mikulincer, 2011) and the effects of attachment on support processes within romantic relationship has been widely documented (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Collins et al., 2011; Kordahji, Bar-Kalifa, & Rafaeli, 2015; Rini & Dunkel Schetter, 2010). As such, to test the unique main and moderating effects of SRE, we controlled for participants' attachment levels in all our analyses.

2. Method

This study is part of a broader project investigating dyadic processes. Data were collected between June 2012 and March 2013. Only procedures and measures relevant to the present study are described below. The data used in this study is available at <https://osf.io/qagsm/>.

2.1. Participants and recruitment

Both print and online flyers invited participants to a couples' study in exchange for approximately \$100 per couple and inclusion

in a raffle for a gift worth approximately \$200. Participants were 86 Israeli couples who had been cohabiting for a minimum of 6 months, and were at least 18 years old. Six couples (7%) dropped out during the study period. Among the remaining couples ($N = 80$) the mean age was 26.7 ($SD = 3.9$) for women and 29.3 ($SD = 4.4$) for men. All participants had completed high school, with an average of 2.5 years ($SD = 2.3$) of post-secondary education; most (61.6%) had also completed a Bachelor's degree. With regards to their occupation, 46.2% of the participants reported being employed, 7.5% self-employed, 5% unemployed, 36.3% currently being in school, and 5% "other". With regards to their income levels, 25% of the couples had combined earnings of less than 1300 USD monthly, 41.2% had between 1300 and 2600 USD, 25% had between 2600 and 3900 USD, 7.5% had between 3900 and 5200 USD, and 1.3% had more than 5200 USD. The average relationship duration was 4.6 years ($SD = 2.9$, range = 1–17 years). The average length of cohabitation was 3.0 years ($SD = 2.5$, range = 6 months–15 years). Fifty-six couples (70.0%) were married, and 21 (26.3%) were parents.

2.1.1. Power analyses

Hypotheses 1–3 (concerning the main effects of the matching states), are based on our previous work (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013) using two samples that were (both) less powered than the current one (~40 couples with 21 daily diaries in the previous samples vs. 80 couples with 35 daily diaries in the current study); thus, the current study is sufficiently powered to test these hypotheses. Hypotheses 4 and 5 (concerning the main and the moderating effects of SRE) are novel; we thus have no prior findings to rely on for estimating power, and therefore assumed small-medium effect sizes. Since these hypotheses involve level 2 variables predicting level 2 parameters (i.e., SRE predicting each individual's intercept or slope), traditional power-analysis strategies can approximate the expected power without the need to estimate (in advance) the other parameters typically required in power analyses for multi-level models. With a small-medium effect ($r = 0.20$), our sample size (of $N = 160$) yields power of 0.82.

2.2. Procedure

After agreement to participate, a lab session (lasting approximately 1.5 h), was conducted in which participants completed background questionnaires, were introduced to the web-based diary and instructed in its use, and received a personal password to access a secure online data collection site (www.qualtrics.com). Each evening, for 35 days, participants received a link to the diary questionnaire in their personal e-mail, and were asked to complete it 1-h before going to sleep. Participants were asked not to discuss their responses with their partner. If participants had not answered the diary for two consecutive days, a research assistant contacted them and emphasized the importance of adherence. Participants completed an average of 34.8 ($SD = 0.6$, range = 32–35) diary entries.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Daily emotional and practical support

Participants completed a daily support inventory (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013), adapted from Barrera, Sandler, and Ramsay (1981). They were asked to indicate whether they had desired and/or received any of 8 forms of emotional support (e.g., *Told me they cared a lot about me*) and 6 forms of practical support (e.g., *Did something concrete and practical to help that was related to problem*) from their partner in response to stressors they had experienced in the last 24 h.

To index the daily emotional and practical support matching states we followed the procedure outlined in Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli (2013). Specifically, for each day, each support behavior was classified into one of the 4 matching states based on the

conjunction between the receipt and the desire items: (a) matching (desired and received); (b) overprovision (no desire but received); (c) support underprovision (desired but not received); and (d) baseline state (no desire and no receipt). We then summed these categories for each support type (i.e., emotional or practical) on each day; thus, on any day, a participant could have had 0–8 (in the case of emotional support) or 0–6 (in the case of practical support) instances of matching, overprovision, underprovision, or baseline; these 4 scores of course had to sum up to 8 (for emotional support) or 6 (for practical support). For example, on a particular day, Dan indicated that he desired receiving from his partner 3 of the specific emotional support behaviors listed in the daily diary, and also indicated that he indeed received these 3 types of support. He also indicated desiring 2 additional emotional support behaviors, but noted that he did not receive these behaviors on this day. Finally, he indicated that he did not desire the remaining 3 emotional support behaviors listed in the daily diary, but did receive 1 of them from his partner. Thus, on this particular day, out of 8 emotional support behaviors, Dan had 3 instances of matching, 2 of underprovision, 1 of overprovision, and 2 of baseline (i.e., no desire and nor receipt). Based on Dan's responses to the separate set of 6 practical support items, a similar breakdown of matching, underprovision, overprovision, and baseline practical support scores would be calculated.

2.3.2. Sense of relational entitlement

During the lab visit participants completed the 33-item SRE scale (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each item was descriptive of their attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and reactions in romantic relationships. Ratings were done on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). As noted earlier, the current study focused on excessive sense of entitlement; consequently, only the average of the 8 items found to load on the excessive entitlement factor in George-Levi et al.'s (2014) study on factor analysis were used. The specific items were: (1) I'm often preoccupied with the question of whether my partner is good enough for me; (2) Sometimes I feel my partner is not good enough for me; (3) I am obsessed with my partner's faults; (4) When my partner frustrates me, I contemplate ending the relationship; (5) When my partner frustrates me, I start thinking about new relationships; (6) When my partner hurts me, I'm immediately filled with a sense of distrust; (7) I often feel I deserve to get more than I do in my relationship; (8) In my relationship, I'm sometimes filled with a kind of rage that I hardly ever experience in daily life. For both genders the internal reliability was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$ for men, and 0.88 for women).

2.3.3. Daily Perceived Partner Responsiveness (PPR)

Participants' daily PPR was assessed using an adapted and shortened daily diary version (Maisei & Gable, 2009) of Reis et al.'s (2004) responsiveness measure, which included 3 items rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from *not at all* to *very much*. Specifically, each day participants were asked to rate their agreement with these items: *my partner understood me*; *my partner made me feel like he/she valued my abilities and opinions*; *my partner made me feel cared for*. These were averaged daily and served as the relational outcome measure of the support matching states.²

2.3.4. Daily stressors

Participants' daily level of stress was assessed using 5 items, each rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from *not at all* to *extremely*. The items, which inquired about stressful events experienced

² The PPR construct is very strongly tied to the relationship satisfaction construct. For example, in the current study the daily PPR index was highly correlated ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$) with a daily measure of relationship satisfaction.

outside the relationship, were: *(a) physical or illness problems or stress; (b) interpersonal problems or stress; (c) problems related to choers; (d) mental stress; or (e) other stress.* The average of these items indexed the level of daily stress, and served as a covariate for the effect of the matching states, thus allowing us to test their effects beyond the stressful situation which prompted the desire/receipt of support in the first place.

2.3.5. Attachment

As noted, we wanted to test the main and moderating effects of SRE above and beyond attachment. As such we also assessed attachment using the 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) scale. The ECR-R assesses two dimensions of attachment insecurity: anxiety (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$ for men, and 0.83 for women) and avoidance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$ for men, and 0.88 for women).

2.4. Data analytic approach

Because our data has a multilevel structure (days nested within couples), we used a dyadic version of 2-level multilevel regression models (using SAS PROC MIXED). Such models have two levels (a within-individual level and a between-individual level), take into account the non-independence of partners in a couple, and can accommodate non-balanced data (see Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). We were interested in both between-person effects (e.g., the degree to which a person was characterized by greater matching over the course of the diary) and within-person effects (e.g., the degree to which a certain day was characterized by greater matching than the person's average). For this reason, we tested two models (one each for emotional and for practical support) in which PPR was predicted by the participants' averages of the support matching states, alongside *daily deviations* from these averages. In addition, because we were interested in testing SRE as a moderator of the matching states, we estimated its main effect, along with its interaction with both day-level matching states (cross-level interactions) and person-level averages of matching states (level-2 interaction). Since we wanted to test the effects of SRE above and beyond attachment, we regressed participants' SRE onto their attachment anxiety and avoidance scores, and then used the obtained individuals' residual scores as their SRE scores. To explore the interaction slopes, we estimated simple slopes for low (-1 SD), average, and high ($+1$ SD) levels of SRE using Preacher, Curran, and Bauer's (2006) computational tool for probing interaction effects in MLM analyses.

In our models we adjusted for the previous day's outcome, which allowed us to reduce the possibility of reverse causation (i.e., that changes in daily affective and relational outcomes precede or cause the matching states). Additionally, consistent with Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli (2013; see study 2), we controlled for the effect of stress (at both day level and person level), thus allowing us to test the matching states' effects, along with their interaction with SRE, beyond the stressful situation which prompted the desire/receipt of support in the first place.

The day-level within-individual (Level 1) equation was:

$$\text{PPR}_{ijk} = \beta_{0ij} + \beta_{1ij}\text{PPR}_{ij(k-1)} + \beta_{2ij}\text{Stress}_{ijk} + \beta_{3ij}\text{Matching}_{ijk} \\ + \beta_{4ij}\text{Overprovision}_{ijk} + \beta_{5ij}\text{Underprovision}_{ijk} + e_{ijk}$$

where PPR_{ijk} is the predicted PPR for subject i in couple j on day k ; $\text{PPR}_{ij(k-1)}$ is that subject's outcome on the previous day; Stress_{ijk} is that subject's level of stress on that day; Matching_{ijk} , $\text{Overprovision}_{ijk}$, and $\text{Underprovision}_{ijk}$ are that subject's (emotional or practical) support matching, overprovision, and underprovision on that day; β_{0ij} is the intercept for this subject, and e_{ijk} is a residual component for this subject on the particular day. All level-1 predictors

(and in particular, the dummy-coded matching states) were person mean-centered, so their effects could be interpreted as changes in outcome associated with deviation from the subject's average reports. Notice that in this equation, there is not an explicit representation for the baseline matching state (of no desire for support nor receipt of it), as it is redundant with the combination of the other three matching states in the model. Specifically, simultaneous inclusion of the $k - 1$ matching codes turns each variable into a contrast between that code and the baseline reference category, and allows the intercept to represent the predicted outcome at the baseline state.

All within-individual effects were considered to be random, and thus allowed to vary from person to person. Thus, the person-level between-individual (Level 2) equation was:

$$\beta_{0ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * \text{SRE}_{ij} + \gamma_{02} * \text{Matching's average}_{ij} \\ + \gamma_{03} * \text{Overprovision's average}_{ij} \\ + \gamma_{04} * \text{Underprovision's average}_{ij} \\ + \gamma_{05} * \text{Matching's average}_{ij} * \text{SRE}_{ij} \\ + \gamma_{06} * \text{Overprovision's average}_{ij} * \text{SRE}_{ij} \\ + \gamma_{07} * \text{Underprovision's average}_{ij} * \text{SRE}_{ij} + u_{0ij}$$

$$\beta_{1ij} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1ij}$$

$$\beta_{2ij} = \gamma_{20} + u_{2ij}$$

$$\beta_{3ij} = \gamma_{30} + \gamma_{31} * \text{SRE}_{ij} + u_{3ij}$$

$$\beta_{4ij} = \gamma_{40} + \gamma_{41} * \text{SRE}_{ij} + u_{4ij}$$

$$\beta_{5ij} = \gamma_{50} + \gamma_{51} * \text{SRE}_{ij} + u_{5ij}$$

The level-2 of the model estimates the (a) fixed (γ_{00}) and random (u_{0ij}) intercept effects; (b) level 1 predictors' fixed (γ_{10} , γ_{20} , γ_{30} , γ_{40} , γ_{50}) and random (u_{1ij} , u_{2ij} , u_{3ij} , u_{4ij} , u_{5ij}) effects; (c) between-person effects of the matching states (γ_{02} , γ_{03} , γ_{04}); (d) SRE main effect (γ_{01}); (e) and SRE interactions with the within-subject (γ_{31} , γ_{41} , γ_{51}) and between-subject matching state (γ_{05} , γ_{06} , γ_{07}). Each Level-2 predictor was centered on the sample's mean, so their effects could be interpreted as change in outcome associated with deviation for the sample's average reports. To account for partners' non-independence, residuals within couples were allowed to correlate, which allowed us to acknowledge that the couple's members' outcomes (PPR) came from the same couple. Additionally, a first-order autoregressive structure was imposed on the covariance matrix for the within-person residuals. Finally, we estimated separate intercepts and slopes for men and women using "two intercepts/slopes" models, which allowed us to treat the partners as distinguishable (for more information see Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013).

3. Results

Descriptive statistics of the study's variables along with paired t -tests for gender differences are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, women reported more emotional support matching than men. No other gender differences were found regarding the other emotional or practical matching states. In addition, women reported higher levels of excessive SRE. Several of the correlations that are presented in Table 1 are of note. First, both at the between-person and at the within-person levels we found substantial associations between the matching states of emotional support and their practical support counterparts (e.g., association between emotional support underprovision and practical support underprovision). Second, out of the three matching states, (emotional or

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and gender differences for the matching states and excessive SRE.

	Men		Women		Gender differences		Zero-order correlations							
	M	SD	M	SD	t(79)	p value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. ES Matching	1.69	1.60	2.11	1.63	-2.09	0.040	-	0.13	-0.04	0.80*	0.12	0.10	0.15	-0.07
2. ES Underprovision	0.40	0.88	0.46	0.80	-1.14	<0.250	-0.22*	-	-0.08	0.14	0.93*	0.02	-0.20*	0.14
3. ES Overprovision	0.82	0.93	0.67	0.62	1.28	0.172	-0.18*	-0.11*	-	0.03	-0.07	0.77*	0.05	-0.09
4. PS Matching	1.02	1.04	1.24	1.11	-1.38	0.173	0.54*	-0.09*	-0.08*	-	0.12	0.15	0.01	0.00
5. PS Underprovision	0.25	0.70	0.25	0.62	-0.02	<0.250	-0.07*	0.45*	-0.03*	-0.18*	-	-0.07	-0.17*	0.13
6. PS Overprovision	0.55	0.65	0.51	0.51	0.40	<0.250	-0.02	0.05*	0.38*	-0.15*	-0.03*	-	-0.04	-0.03
7. PPR	5.06	0.88	5.10	0.87	-0.48	<0.250	0.16*	-0.33*	0.11*	0.10*	-0.20*	0.02	-	-0.39*
8. Excessive SRE	1.48	0.49	1.69	0.72	-2.40	0.019	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

ES = Emotional Support; PS = Practical Support; PPR = Perceived Partner Responsiveness; SRE = Sense of Relational Entitlement; Means and SD for the daily variables are at the between-person levels. Between-person correlations are presented above the diagonal and were calculated by averaging the daily responses over the entire diary period for each subject, and thus were based on $N = 160$ participants. Within-person correlations are presented below the diagonal and were calculated using person-mean centered variables measured daily, and thus were based on $N = 5578$ daily entries.

* $p < 0.05$.

practical) support underprovision had the strongest (negative) associations with PPR. Finally, PPR was negatively associated with SRE.

3.1. Emotional support matching states and their moderation

Results of the hierarchical linear models regarding emotional support are presented in Table 2. Support matching was associated with greater PPR, at both the day and the person level, and for both genders. For men, at the day-level, it was moderated by SRE. Estimation of simple slopes indicated that support matching was associated with greater PPR at all levels of SRE, but the slope for men with high levels of SRE was steeper ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$) than for men with average levels of SRE ($b = 0.09$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.001$), which themselves were steeper than for those with low levels of SRE ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$).

Support overprovision was associated at the day-level (but not the person level) with greater PPR for both genders. Support underprovision was associated at the day-level (but not the person level) with less PPR for both genders. The person-level effect of support underprovision was moderated by SRE for both genders. Estimation of simple slopes indicated that support underprovision was

not associated with PPR for participants with low ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = 0.151$ for men; $b = 0.59$, $SE = 0.48$, $p = 0.221$ for women), or with average ($b = -0.03$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = 0.765$ for men; $b = -0.14$, $SE = 0.42$, $p = 0.741$ for women) levels of SRE. However, it was significantly associated with lower levels of PPR for men ($b = -0.29$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = 0.016$), and marginally associated with lower levels of PPR for women ($b = -0.87$, $SE = 0.47$, $p = 0.065$) with high SRE.

3.2. Practical support matching states and their moderation

Results of the hierarchical linear models regarding practical support are presented in Table 3. Support matching was associated at the day-level with greater PPR, for both genders. For men, it was moderated by SRE. Estimation of simple slopes indicated that support matching was not associated with PPR for men with low levels of SRE ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = 0.473$). However, it was positively associated with greater levels of PPR for men with average ($b = 0.08$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < 0.001$) or high levels of SRE ($b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.001$).

Support overprovision was not associated with PPR at either the day or the person levels, for either gender. For women, Support

Table 2
Emotional support matching states and sense of relational entitlement (SRE) as predictors of PPR.

	Men			Women		
	Estimate (SE)	95% CI	Effect size	Estimate (SE)	95% CI	Effect size
Intercept	5.06 (0.10)***	4.86; 5.26		5.20 (0.09)***	5.02; 5.37	
Entitlement	-0.12 (0.23)	-0.57; 0.34	0.004	-0.31 (0.15)*	-0.61; -0.01	0.057
<i>Day level:</i>						
Matching	0.09 (0.02)***	0.06; 0.13	0.387	0.06 (0.01)***	0.03; 0.08	0.283
Overprovision	0.08 (0.02)***	0.04; 0.11	0.324	0.05 (0.01)***	0.02; 0.08	0.341
Underprovision	-0.15 (0.03)***	-0.22; -0.09	0.300	-0.19 (0.03)***	-0.26; -0.13	0.401
Matching X SRE	0.08 (0.04)*	0.01; 0.15	0.083	0.01 (0.02)	-0.02; 0.04	0.009
Overprovision X SRE	0.00 (0.04)	-0.08; 0.08	0.000	0.01 (0.02)	-0.03; 0.05	0.017
Underprovision X SRE	-0.14 (0.07)	-0.29; 0.01	0.069	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.12; 0.06	0.010
<i>Person level:</i>						
Matching	0.16 (0.07)*	0.02; 0.29	0.072	0.14 (0.05)*	0.03; 0.24	0.083
Overprovision	0.12 (0.16)	-0.21; 0.45	0.007	0.23 (0.14)	-0.05; 0.51	0.037
Underprovision	-0.03 (0.11)	-0.24; 0.18	0.001	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.35; 0.07	0.023
Matching X SRE	0.06 (0.14)	-0.22; 0.33	0.002	0.11 (0.12)	-0.13; 0.35	0.011
Overprovision X SRE	0.43 (0.41)	-0.38; 1.23	0.015	0.15 (0.27)	-0.38; 0.68	0.005
Underprovision X SRE	-0.47 (0.17)**	-0.81; -0.14	0.101	-1.34 (0.42)**	-2.18; -0.51	0.127

Effect size was estimated by transforming the obtained t and df of the MLM into R^2 estimates (see Edwards, Muller, Wolfinger, Qaqish, & Schabenberger, 2008 for a discussion of semipartial R^2 for linear mixed models).

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3
Practical support matching states and sense of relational entitlement (SRE) as predictors of PPR.

	Men			Women		
	Estimate (SE)	95% CI	Effect size	Estimate (SE)	95% CI	Effect size
Intercept	4.99 (0.10)***	4.79; 5.18		5.18 (0.09)***	5.01; 5.36	
Entitlement	-0.37 (0.24)	-0.84; 0.10	0.034	-0.47 (0.17)**	-0.80; -0.13	0.099
<i>Day level:</i>						
Matching	0.08 (0.01)***	0.05; 0.11	0.411	0.04 (0.02)*	0.01; 0.07	0.068
Overprovision	0.03 (0.02)	-0.01; 0.08	0.044	0.02 (0.02)	-0.02; 0.07	0.020
Underprovision	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.16; 0.02	0.083	-0.17 (0.04)***	-0.26; -0.09	0.456
Matching X SRE	0.12 (0.04)***	0.05; 0.19	0.179	0.04 (0.02)	-0.01; 0.09	0.039
Overprovision X SRE	0.02 (0.05)	-0.08; 0.13	0.005	0.04 (0.03)	-0.02; 0.11	0.043
Underprovision X SRE	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.21; 0.19	0.000	-0.11 (0.07)	-0.24; 0.03	0.077
<i>Person level:</i>						
Matching	0.01 (0.12)	-0.24; 0.25	0.000	0.15 (0.09)	-0.02; 0.32	0.041
Overprovision	-0.09 (0.24)	-0.57; 0.39	0.002	0.14 (0.18)	-0.21; 0.49	0.009
Underprovision	0.01 (0.14)	-0.27; 0.29	0.000	-0.16 (0.14)	-0.44; 0.12	0.019
Matching X SRE	-0.30 (0.27)	-0.84; 0.24	0.017	0.06 (0.20)	-0.33; 0.45	0.001
Overprovision X SRE	0.22 (0.48)	-0.73; 1.17	0.003	0.74 (0.43)	-0.11; 1.59	0.041
Underprovision X SRE	-0.44 (0.25)	-0.94; 0.06	0.041	-2.03 (0.67)**	-3.37; -0.69	0.115

underprovision was associated at the day-level with less PPR. The person-level effect of women's support underprovision was moderated by their SRE. Estimation of simple slopes indicated that support underprovision was positively associated with PPR for women with low levels of SRE ($b = 0.94$, $SE = 0.40$, $p = 0.019$), not associated with PPR for women with average levels of SRE ($b = -0.16$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = 0.248$), and negatively associated with PPR for women's with high levels of SRE ($b = -1.26$, $SE = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$).

3.3. SRE as a predictor of PPR

After adjusting for the effects of emotional matching states, stress, and attachment, SRE was negatively associated with women's PPR, but not associated with men's PPR. This finding held true in both models. Notably, running similar models in which raw SRE (i.e., without the adjustment for attachment) was used we did find significant negative associations between SRE and PPR for men ($b = -0.55$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$ for emotional support model; $b = -0.67$, $SE = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$ for practical support model).

4. Discussion

People with an excessive SRE are expected to be highly sensitive to the fulfillment (or lack of fulfillment) of their relational needs or wishes (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). In the current study, we sought to examine states of matched and mismatched support as test cases for this expectation. Specifically, we extended our previous work which builds on Cutrona et al.'s (1990) Optimal Matching Theory of social support. Whereas the original model argued that the most beneficial support behaviors would be those which match the support goals or needs of a recipient, recent evidence from our lab (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013) and others' (Brock & Lawrence, 2009; Priem & Solomon, 2015; Reynolds & Perrin, 2004) has highlighted the need to examine the negative effects of support mismatching. Using dyadic diary data from romantic couples, the current study went one step further to explore the possibility that excessive SRE would moderate or augment recipients' responses to support matching states (i.e., matching, overprovision, and underprovision).

We predicted that emotional, but not practical, *support matching* will be associated with greater PPR. This hypothesis was partially supported. As predicted, *emotional* support matching was associated with greater PPR, for both genders and both at the day

and the person levels. However, contrary to our expectations, *practical* support matching was also associated with greater PPR for both genders, though only at the day-level

This pattern of results differs somewhat from those obtained in previous studies, which documented greater beneficial effects for emotional support in general (Chen & Feeley, 2012; Reinhardt, Boerner, & Horowitz, 2006), and for emotional support matching in particular (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013; Cutrona et al., 2007). However, it is noteworthy that whereas the benefits of *practical* support matching were found at the day level, the benefits of emotional support matching were found at both the day level and the person level. Therefore, it may be that the former reflects more transient effects, whereas the latter reflects both transient and stable effects. This differential explanation based on the time span, can be examined in future studies by incorporating measurements of both higher time resolutions (e.g., every several hours) as well as lower time resolutions (e.g., over several months).

We further predicted that individuals with an excessive SRE (George-Levi et al., 2014; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011) would respond more strongly to support matches (i.e., perceive greater increases in responsiveness when their support expectations are met). This was expected because high SRE individuals are more sensitive to the fulfillment or unfulfillment of their needs. Our results partially supported this expectation, and showed that for men (but not for women), and with both emotional and practical support matching, those with a high level of excessive SRE experienced a greater increase in their PPR on days in which their supportive needs were met.

We also predicted that *support underprovision* will be negatively associated with PPR - received clear support at the day-level. Specifically, for both genders, day-level emotional support underprovision was associated with less PPR; for women this association was also significant when practical support was underprovided. These effects are consistent with Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli's (2013) results of stronger adverse effects of support underprovision for women. Importantly, in the current study, the negative effects associated with underprovision were found at the day level, and not at the person level. This difference may result from (a) the fact that in the current study we adjusted for person-level stress, in addition to the day-level stress controlled for in Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli's study; (b) the fact that in the current study we adjusted for a person-level characteristic: SRE.

As was predicted, the association between person-level support underprovision and PPR was moderated by SRE for both genders, though for men this moderating effect was found only with regard

to emotional support. Specifically, men and women with high SRE whose desire for emotional support from their partner was not met perceived lower responsiveness from their partners. For women, this was also true regarding *practical* support. This pattern indicates that people characterized by high levels of excessive SRE are harmed more when their support expectations are violated.

Surprisingly, women with low levels of SRE experienced higher levels of PPR in response to support underprovision. One explanation for this surprising pattern can be drawn from the Risk Regulation Model (Murray et al., 2006). According to this model, individuals with greater self-esteem, security in their attachment, and trust towards their partner, attempt to enhance closeness and connectedness with their partners when facing relational risk. They may do so either using behavioral (e.g., increasing dependence) or psychological means (e.g., viewing their relationships as more intimate and valuable than usual). As lower SRE is associated with greater self-esteem and security, it may be that when participants with low levels of SRE encounter support underprovision (which can be thought of as a relational risk) they alter their perceptions (PPR) in an attempt to enhance closeness in their relationships. Still, this finding requires further scrutiny as in the current study it emerged only for women and only at the person level; in contrast, at the day level, women's PPR was harmed by experiencing support underprovision, regardless of SRE levels.

We made no directional prediction regarding *support overprovision*, considering the mixed findings that have emerged from the literature. In the present study, we found day-level emotional support overprovision to be positively associated with PPR, but found no other associations for emotional or practical support overprovision.

We argued that support overprovision is essentially open to the recipient's interpretation. At times, it may be construed as helpful; at others times, as threatening. Indeed, in their study, Bar-Kalifa and Rafaeli (2013) found both favorable and unfavorable associations with support overprovision. A promising route out of the maze of conflicting findings reported in the literature would be to take recipients' personality differences into account. In the current study we predicted that that individuals characterized by an excessive SRE would be more sensitive than individuals with a low SRE to support overprovision (i.e., would perceive greater decreases in their partners' responsiveness when receiving unwanted support). Our results did not support this prediction, and none of the effects of support overprovision were qualified by SRE. To further clarify for whom this matching state yields positive or negative effects, future studies should examine additional personal (e.g., self-esteem), relational (e.g., commitment), or situational (e.g., high stress) moderators of this particular matching state.

Our last prediction was that an *excessive SRE* will be associated with poorer PPR. This is consistent with previous work demonstrating negative interpersonal effects for excessive SRE (Campbell et al., 2004). When controlling for the support matching states (either emotional or practical), this was indeed found to be the case - though only for women. Importantly, whereas previous studies used cross-sectional methodology, our study was the first to provide ecologically valid evidence for such effects, indicating that these adverse effects are also manifested in the daily lives of romantic couples. The absent association between men's excessive SRE and PPR may suggest that its direct effect may be mediated or totally explained by men's attachment insecurity, a construct adjusted for in all our analyses.

4.1. Limitations and future directions

As noted earlier, an excessive SRE has been linked to many factors, such as attachment insecurity, low self-esteem, and emotional

instability (George-Levi et al., 2014; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). In the current study we controlled for participants' attachment, as the consequential effects of attachment on support processes have already been extensively documented (e.g., Collins et al., 2011; Kordahji et al., 2015). Additionally, relational entitlement has been thought of as a result of primary attachment processes (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Future work should try to further pinpoint (a) SRE's unique contributions, beyond other related factors, to individuals' responses to the support matching states; and (b) whether the effect of SRE is mediated through these factors (e.g., recipients with an excessive SRE are more emotionally unstable, and thus tend to perceive partners' responsiveness as low during support mismatches).

In the current study we selected daily PPR as our key outcome because this construct (a) has been identified as very central in relationship processes (Reis & Clark, 2013); (b) has been found to mediate the effect of support (mis)matching states (Bar-Kalifa & Rafaeli, 2013); (c) is conceptually tied to excessive SRE, as, subjects high on this personality dimension expect their partners to be highly responsive to their needs or goals. Future work may wish to go one step further to examine other more long-term outcomes (e.g., relationship dissolution) and to test whether the moderating effects of SRE on the effects of support matching states in predicting these long-term outcomes are mediated through the more transient momentary or daily PPR, as was examined in the current study.

The couples in the current study were of relatively high socioeconomic status (see Section 2), and presented rather high average levels of PPR (as reflected in the intercepts reported in the tables). In the future, it is worth examining the effects of an excessive SRE on (mis)matching states within more vulnerable populations, where higher levels of stress are more prevalent, and for whom the need for support is more urgent or chronic. For example, these processes could be examined among couples in which one person faces a chronic illness (Vilchinsky et al., 2011). Similarly, they could be examined among couples where one person is facing an acute stressor (e.g., Bolger et al., 2000). Under both chronic and acute conditions, expectations for the partner's availability as well as desire to receive support might become more pronounced, especially for those with a strong sense of relational entitlement, for whom situations of neediness may be particularly salient. A different pattern may emerge in couples facing a joint stressor (e.g., a child's illness, a move), in which even high SRE might be mitigated by the knowledge the partner's resources are also limited. Of course, these ideas are speculative at this time and require empirical examination.

As noted, our study is the first to examine the contribution of excessive levels of SRE in an ecologically valid context of real-life dyadic daily interactions. Previously, this measure has depended exclusively upon cross sectional self-report measures; the move to daily diaries does not circumvent the reliance on self-report methods. As such, it remains influenced by subjective perception.

Relatedly, our analyses adjusted for the previous day's PPR, thus partially allaying reverse causation concerns. Still, the use of these diaries in a correlational research design does not allow us to infer a causal association between the study factors. It is possible that other intervening factors may account for the observed changes in outcomes. Thus, it would be important for future studies to complement our findings using other methodologies which rely less on subjective reports (e.g., observational methods) and which can more reliably detect causal effects (e.g., manipulating activation of SRE).

Our study demonstrated the moderating effect of excessive SRE on one's responses to support (mis)matches. In effect, SRE (along with other possible individual difference moderators) transforms a given state (the matched receipt, over-receipt, or under-receipt

of support) into an effective state (the one that ultimately determines their perceptions, emotions, and subsequent behavioral choices; for review, see [Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003](#)). In the current study, we focused on a relatively short-term effective outcome – namely, the perception of the partner's responsiveness. Future work should further explore the long-term down-stream consequences of this transformation. For example, we may expect high SRE individuals to respond to under-provided support with punitive retaliation rather than with accommodation.

4.2. Summary

The present study examined the moderating effect of an excessive SRE on the association between support matching states and PPR. To our knowledge, this is the first study to date to suggest that an individual difference factor may moderate recipients' reactivity to states of support (mis)matching.

Though research on relational entitlement is still in its infancy (cf., [George-Levi et al., 2014](#); [Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011](#)), our results also point to some (admittedly tentative) clinical implications. For example, they suggest that it may prove fruitful for couples therapists to pay closer attention to each partner's sense of relational entitlement and to its possible influence on social support transactions. Therapists could make partners aware of the ways in which excessive entitlement and unrealistic expectations hinder relationship quality (e.g., [Lavner, Karney, & Bradbury, 2013](#); for a recent review, see [Lemay & Venaglia, 2016](#)). They would then try to help partners bring these down to more realistic levels.

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