

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

BEING MINDFUL ABOUT SEEKING SUPPORT

A Thesis in

Communication Arts and Sciences

by

Lynsey Michelle Medd

© 2023 Lynsey Michelle Medd

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
For the degree of

Master of Arts

May 2023

The thesis of Lynsey Michelle Medd was received and approved by the following:

Andrew C. High
Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Director of Graduate Studies
Thesis Advisor

Jeremy D. Engels
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Barry Director of the Paterno Fellows Program

Brian Manata
Assistant Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

ABSTRACT

Seeking support is a complex and consequential step in the process of supportive communication, yet research has seldom examined what characterizes the ways in which people seek support and what variables explain how they do so. Through an integration of interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking, this study examines how mindfulness, communicative efficacy, and motivation are associated with support seeking behavior. Findings from a sample of Qualtrics participants ($N = 502$) demonstrate relationships between facets of interpersonal mindfulness and the content and style of peoples' support seeking messages. Specifically, awareness of self and others is significantly and positively associated with emotion focus and elaboration within support seeking behavior, and nonjudgmental acceptance is significantly and positively associated with direct requests and problem focus within support seeking behavior. Communicative efficacy and motivation were also significantly and positively associated with certain dimensions of support seeking, though no interaction effects were found between interpersonal mindfulness, efficacy, and motivation on how people seek support. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: support seeking, supportive communication, interpersonal mindfulness, communicative efficacy, motivation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION.....	4
MINDFULNESS.....	13
FOCUS OF THE CURRENT STUDY.....	18
METHODS.....	21
RESULTS.....	26
DISCUSSION.....	35
References.....	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Correlation matrix.....	27
Table 2. Results from hierarchical regression models testing interpersonal mindfulness, communicative efficacy, motivation, and support seeking behavior.....	30

Introduction

When enacted effectively, supportive communication offers psychological, physical, and relational benefits to those who receive it (MacGeorge et al., 2011). Support is particularly valuable when people experience stress because it can elicit affect improvement, cognitive reappraisal, relational benefits, and enhanced esteem (Burlison & Goldsmith, 1998; MacGeorge et al., 2011). The process of supportive communication often begins when a person seeks support, and seeking support is defined as any communicative activity that elicits supportive actions from others (MacGeorge et al., 2011). Seeking support is consequential because the behaviors used to seek support influence the quality of support that is received (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). People can seek support in a variety of ways, yet research mainly considers how directly people seek support, even though directness is only one dimension that characterizes variation in this behavior. Recent research has integrated aspects of disclosure to add nuance to descriptions of how people seek support (Steuber & High, 2015). Though research suggests that strategies of seeking support influence supportive outcomes (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995), research on seeking support often considers people's likelihood of seeking support, the type of support they desire, or who they would contact for assistance (Norberg et al., 2006; Scott et al., 2013). Less is known about how people seek support or the factors that explain variation in support seeking.

Mindfulness offers psychological and physical benefits to those who practice it (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and this study seeks to understand whether mindfulness shapes how people seek support. Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Originating from Eastern contemplative traditions, mindfulness has historically been associated with the formal practice of mindfulness

meditation (Shapiro et al., 2006). Recently, mindfulness has been used to understand aspects of the process of supportive communication (Jones et al., 2019; Jones & Hansen, 2015). For example, Jones et al. (2019) found a positive indirect relationship between facets of mindfulness and support provision, mediated by empathy and active listening. Mindfulness can also be used to understand how and why people seek support, as previous researchers have argued that supportive communication and mindfulness are both guided by processes of emotion regulation (Jones & Hansen, 2015). When a person seeks support, they often disclose personal information about their emotions and their problems (Derlega et al., 2008), which requires awareness of the self and the other within the interaction. Thus, interpersonal mindfulness may provide a more precise understanding of why people seek support in certain ways.

The dual process theory of supportive communication outcomes offers an explanation for why certain supportive interactions are more effective than others (Burlleson et al., 2011). This theory suggests that peoples' ability, or communicative efficacy, and motivation influence the extent to which they process supportive messages and interactions and that the outcomes of supportive interactions depend on both the quality of messages and a recipient's processing of them (Burlleson et al., 2011). Though the dual process theory of supportive communication outcomes is traditionally used to explain the processing of supportive messages, its components of communicative efficacy and motivation have been used to explain why people use different strategies to seek support (i.e., High & Scharp, 2015). For example, findings from one study imply that people with high levels of ability and motivation to seek support are more likely to exhibit direct support seeking strategies, such as directly asking someone for assistance (High & Scharp, 2015). The nature of mindfulness includes consciousness, awareness, and attentiveness, (Brown & Ryan, 2003), which are individual differences that may enhance a person's

communicative efficacy and motivation to seek support. To expand research on supportive communication, people's mindfulness, communicative efficacy, and motivation should be examined in concert to uncover how they work together to influence support seeking.

The goals of this paper are threefold. First, this paper aims to expand the ways in which support seeking messages are conceptualized and studied. Using broader research on interpersonal communication as a foundation, we seek to better conceptualize support seeking by characterizing the content and style of those messages. Second, this paper aims to further integrate mindfulness into research on supportive communication by examining how mindfulness corresponds with seeking support. Examining mindfulness as an individual difference allows researchers to explain variance in support seeking messages. Third, this paper aims to consider how mindfulness interacts with other variables that are relevant to support, (i.e., communicative efficacy and motivation). The current study contributes to research on supportive communication by considering whether and how mindfulness interacts with variables from the dual process theory of supportive communication to further understand support seeking behavior. This paper begins with a literature review on supportive communication and mindfulness. Then, the focus of the current study is summarized and methods to test the hypotheses are proposed. After that, results are explained, followed by a discussion of the findings, implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Supportive Communication

Supportive communication is defined as any behavior produced with the intention of helping those who need it (Burlison & MacGeorge, 2000). Supportive interactions typically follow a structure where support is sought, support is provided, and then support is received and processed (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). When done effectively, supportive communication can have beneficial impacts on personal and relational outcomes (MacGeorge et al., 2011). The inherent structure of supportive communication suggests that what occurs in one step of the process influences what occurs in subsequent phases (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). This logic underscores the importance of studying seeking support because seeking is characterized as the “first act” in the process of supportive communication, which shapes what transpires subsequently (MacGeorge et al., 2011). A majority of the research on supportive communication has examined features of supportive messages and outcomes of supportive interactions (High & Dillard, 2012; Holmstrom et al., 2015), documenting consequential variations in messages that are provided to people in need and offering robust explanations as to why certain interactions are more successful than others. Although the process of seeking support has received less scholarly attention than support provision or processing, researchers tend to examine peoples’ likelihood of seeking support, the types of support sought, or the sources to whom people turn when they experience a stressor (MacGeorge et al., 2011). In the present study, I examine how people seek support and what compels people to seek support in different ways.

Support Seeking

Support seeking is defined by MacGeorge et al. (2011) as “intentional communicative activity with the aim of eliciting supportive actions from others” (p. 330) and typically initiates a supportive interaction. Research on coping indicates that a person’s perception of a stressful

event corresponds with various coping behaviors, such as seeking support (e.g., Li & Yang, 2009). People typically seek support from their family members, friends, or romantic partners, and their choice of who to seek support from is contingent on their perception of who is able and willing to provide them support (MacGeorge et al., 2011). The type of support people seek can be explained by appraisal theories, which indicate that the way people make sense of their stressor will correspond with the type of support they seek (MacGeorge et al., 2011). Research on seeking support can be extended by considering how people seek support, including dimensions that describe the content and style of those messages.

Sensitive interaction systems theory is often used to understand support seeking behavior (SIST; Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). SIST posits that the way people communicate their need for support influences the support that is provided to them. This theory defines support seeking behavior using two dimensions: direct/indirect and verbal/nonverbal. Directness refers to the explicitness with which a person expresses their need for support, and the verbal/nonverbal dimension describes the cues a person uses to express their request for support. Direct verbal behavior includes explicitly asking for help, and direct nonverbal behaviors include crying and pouting. Indirect verbal behavior includes hinting or complaining about a stressor, and indirect nonverbal behaviors include sighing and sulking. In general, SIST asserts that direct verbal seeking behavior elicits the most desirable outcomes for the support recipient (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). Indeed, research supports the notion that directly seeking support often elicits more effective, helpful, and sophisticated supportive messages than indirectly seeking assistance (Burlison & Goldsmith, 1998; Williams & Mickelson, 2008). Despite its practical value, SIST has been criticized for focusing too much on the form of support seeking behavior rather than the content and style of support seeking messages (Goldsmith, 1995; MacGeorge,

2011). Notably, the complex and consequential process of seeking support can be understood beyond the directness of a support seekers' behavior.

In critiquing Barbee and Cunningham (1995), Goldsmith (1995) asserted that there is an inconsistency between their interactive coping typology and their support activation typology, where the interactive coping typology focuses on content of messages, but the support activation typology focuses on the form in which seeking messages are delivered. For example, the interactive coping behaviors in Barbee and Cunningham (1995) include dimensions of emotion-focus and problem-focus, but these dimensions are conflated in their support activation typology. Specifically, some of the behaviors in the verbal/direct dimension of support activation (argued to be the "gold standard" by SIST) do not explicitly request support, but rather tell the provider about the problem, disclose details about the problem, or describe feelings related to the problem. Although prior research on seeking support has used these dimensions to measure support seeking (High & Scharp, 2015; Mortenson, 2009), the directness of a person's behavior as measured by Barbee and Cunningham's (1995) scheme conflates the content and style of their communication.

According to Goldsmith (1995), SIST explains a person's strategies used to seek support rather than the communication they use. To better understand support seeking, researchers can draw on other areas of interpersonal communication, such as self-disclosure. In fact, one of the main reasons people disclose personal information is to seek support (Derlega et al., 2008). Support seeking and self-disclosure are similar in that they both entail revealing personal information with others and may be considered face-threatening acts (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; MacGeorge et al., 2011). Although not all disclosures are made to seek support, all instances of seeking support likely involve some degree of disclosure (Caughlin et al., 2008; Rains, 2014;

Sarason & Sarason, 2009). Along these lines, some researchers who study supportive communication label the people who seek support as “disclosers” (Bodie et al., 2021).

A large amount of research has explored variations in the content and quality of messages used to provide support. Theories and research on verbal person-centeredness, advice response theory, and the cognitive emotional theory of esteem support messages explain variation in messages used to provide emotional, informational, and esteem support, respectively (High & Dillard, 2012; Holmstrom & Burleson, 2011; MacGeorge et al., 2004). Considering the plethora of research on messages intended to provide support, the lack of attention paid to understand the components of support seeking messages stands in stark contrast. Integrating self-disclosure with support seeking will allow researchers to better understand and study the content and style of how people seek support. Doing so is necessary to understand variation within support seeking messages.

Dimensions of Support Seeking Messages

Messages conveyed in interpersonal interactions can be described based on their content and style (Watzlawick & Beavin, 1967). Research on esteem support defines message content as the words that are communicated and message style as the way in which the words are communicated (Holmstrom & Burleson, 2011). Along the same lines, research on supportive messages has focused on message content (High & Dillard, 2012; Holmstrom & Burleson, 2011; Shebib et al., 2020) and message style (Holmstrom & Burleson, 2011), though research has yet to define the content and style of support seeking messages. Drawing on appraisal theories (Lazarus, 1991), the content of a support seeking message might be best described as typically consisting of three components: disclosure about a problem, disclosure about emotions, and a request for support (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Rains et al., 2020). Similarly, some

researchers conceptualize direct support seeking as messages that express problems and/or feelings by explicitly asking for help (Goldsmith, 1995). Building on prior research on supportive communication (Priem & Solomon, 2018) and adding precision to the notion of directness from SIST (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995), the style of a support seeking message can reflect the degree to which people are explicit and elaborate in their requests for assistance. Adopting a content and style approach to understanding support seeking messages allows researchers to explore variation within and across messages and to predict what influences those variations.

The content of a support seeking message can be understood by using components of appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991). Appraisal theories posit that a person's cognitions about a stressor influence the emotions and effects they feel regarding that stressor (Lazarus, 1991). Extending this logic, the CETESM, which is grounded in appraisal theory, contends that esteem support messages can be differentiated based on the degree to which they focus on a problem or its corresponding emotions. Problem-focused content refers to people's behavior related to a stressor, and emotion-focused content refers to people's feelings about a stressor (Holmstrom & Burleson, 2011). Similarly, Kent de Grey et al. (2018) asked participants to focus on their thoughts about a stressor and their corresponding emotions when constructing a supportive interaction. Though these concepts have yet to be applied to research on seeking support, the literature on appraisal, self-disclosure, and esteem support implies that support seeking messages might include content focused on seekers' emotions and their problems. People's appraisals of a stressor shape their thoughts and experiences (Lazarus, 1991), and people's impressions of a stressor shape how they seek support (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). Because thoughts about a

problem and its emotions are central to appraisal and coping, they are likely reflected in how people seek support.

Another element of the content of support seeking messages that has been described in previous research is a request for support (Rains et al., 2021). Requesting assistance has been described to be the primary goal associated with supportive exchanges, and it is heightened by contextual factors like the severity of a problem (Oh & LaRose, 2016). Research in a variety of contexts documents that the resources people receive are based on whether or not they request support (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Lampe et al., 2014), and Barrera (1986) noted differences between support that was solicited or not as a means to differentiate supportive messages. Along these lines, research considers the solicitation of support to be a determinant of its efficacy (Paik, 2020). Given its place in prior conceptualizations of seeking support (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Rains et al., 2021) and its consequences for the remainder of supportive interactions (Van Swol et al., 2017), we include the solicitation of support or a request for assistance as another component of the content of support seeking messages.

Whereas the content of a message refers to what is said, the style of a message refers to how it is conveyed. One way to understand the style of support seeking messages is through how explicit and elaborate they are. Explicitness refers to the degree to which a person makes their communication transparent (Dillard & Marshall, 2003), and elaboration refers to additional comments, justifications, or explanations that support people's assertions (Roloff et al., 1988). Emotion-focused messages that are explicit and elaborate include clear disclosures and explanations about emotions and feelings related to a stressor. Problem-focused messages that are explicit and elaborate include clear comments and justifications about behavior related to the stressor. Support seeking messages that are less explicit and elaborate describe the problem

vaguely with little to no explanation and allude to emotions without directly labeling them. Although the style of messages can vary in numerous ways, we focus on explicitness and elaboration because they are more concrete conceptualizations of the directness of communication, and they have produced interesting results in previous research on supportive communication. For example, Priem and Solomon (2018) found that perceptions of explicitness and elaboration within support provision predict emotional improvement in a recipient. Another study that operationalized elaboration as the number of sentences used to express a point within a discussion found that elaboration enhanced the probability that the message was recalled by the recipient (Samp & Solomon, 1999). In research on verbal person-centeredness, explicitness has been described as a dimension that makes the provider's desire to convey support clear and easy to comprehend (Jones & Guerrero, 2001). Thus, it might be beneficial for people to seek support using a style that conveys explicitness and elaboration, so that the provider is able to thoroughly understand both their problems and emotions.

Support seeking messages can be defined through their content and style. The content of support seeking messages likely includes disclosure about emotions, problems, and a request for support. The style of support seeking messages can be characterized according to the degree to which the messages are explicit and elaborate. More thoroughly considering the content and style of support seeking messages allows researchers to better understand, conceptualize, and study the influential components of the messages that initiate supportive interactions. Although not exhaustive, our initial conceptualization is grounded in theory and represents a useful starting point to characterize these complex and consequential messages. In the present study, these dimensions of support seeking messages are hypothesized to vary based on a person's levels of mindfulness and their efficacy and motivation to seek support.

Communicative Efficacy and Motivation

Despite its benefits, not everyone who needs assistance seeks support or does so effectively (Williams & Mickelson, 2008). We seek to understand and explain some factors that correspond with the content and style of people's attempt to garner support. In particular, we do so by drawing on research that notes the relevance and importance of communicative efficacy, motivation, and mindfulness. The dual process theory of supportive communication outcomes explains why certain supportive messages or interactions are more effective than others (Burlison et al., 2011). According to the theory, a person's ability and motivation influence the extent to which they process messages, and the outcomes of a supportive interaction depend on both the quality of messages and the seekers' processing of them (Burlison et al., 2011). Ability, which is operationalized in the current study as communicative efficacy, refers to a person's belief in their capacity to enact a certain behavior to lead to a successful outcome (Afifi & Afifi, 2009; Bandura, 1995). Motivation is reflected in a person's engagement in a supportive interaction, and people are often more engaged when they want to alleviate their stress (Bodie, 2011). The severity of a problem often serves as a proxy for motivation, where more severe problems can increase people's motivation to seek support (Bodie, 2012; Feng & MacGeorge, 2010; Oh & LaRose, 2016).

Though dual process theorizing was traditionally developed to explain how people process messages, ability and motivation have been used to understand various aspects of supportive communication. For example, Harvey-Knowles (2018) found that after taking a workshop on supportive communication, caregivers' ability to provide support to cancer patients improved. Another study found that among newly diagnosed cancer patients, increased distress was associated with decreased ability and motivation to seek support (Linden & Vodermaier,

2012). Two studies in particular have used ability and motivation to understand support seeking behaviors. First, Mortenson (2009) found that people with higher levels of communicative adaptability (i.e., ability) use more direct strategies to seek support. In addition, High and Scharp (2015) found communicative adaptability and motivation to be directly and positively associated with support seeking behaviors. Research shows that ability and motivation are associated with seeking support, but it has yet to use these variables to understand how they correspond with the content and style of support seeking messages. The dual process theory suggests that a person's communicative efficacy and motivation to process messages are influenced by individual differences (Bodie, 2011). Accordingly, I argue that communicative efficacy and motivation combine with a person's mindfulness to shape how they seek support.

Mindfulness

Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Mindfulness (Pali: *sati*; Sankrit: *smrti*) originates from Buddhist meditative training, where it is one form of meditation. As a practice and a philosophy, mindfulness is a 2,500-year-old form of meditation that includes intellectual, ethical, psychological, and religious components (Kang & Whittingham, 2010). To be mindful is to be in a state of consciousness that is characterized by an open receptive awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, emotions, and sensations without reacting or succumbing to them (Bishop et al., 2004). This self-regulatory process has the power to disengage people from their automatic thoughts, habits, and unhealthy behavioral patterns (Brown & Ryan, 2004). Evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness practices is developing in tandem with its popularity as a clinical intervention. A meta-analysis of mindful meditation programs revealed that mindfulness practices can have a role in treating depression, anxiety, and pain (Goyal et al., 2014). Two common integrations of mindfulness in clinical psychology are mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). MBSR was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn in 1990 to help clients develop mindfulness in their everyday lives. MBSR has been shown to be effective for people who experience chronic pain, cancer, heart disease, depression, and anxiety (Grossman et al., 2004). MBCT is similar to MBSR in its conceptualization and training techniques; however, it was developed to help clients control their ruminative cognitive-affective processing and, as a result, lessen depressive thoughts (Segal et al., 2004). Although mindfulness is an intrapersonal practice and an individual difference, a person's level of mindfulness influences their interpersonal interactions (Jones & Hansen, 2015;

Pratscher et al., 2019). Along these lines, Burgoon et al. (2000) suggest that being mindful when engaging with others likely leads to more effective communication.

Mindfulness has begun to be integrated into research on interpersonal communication, within contexts such as patient-clinician care, team-member exchange, and romantic relationships. For example, one study found that clinician's levels of mindfulness are associated with the quality of their patient care (Beach et al., 2013). Another study found an indirect association between mindfulness and team-member exchange mediated by emotion regulation (Hawkes & Neale, 2020). A meta-analysis on mindfulness and romantic relationship satisfaction found individual levels of mindfulness to be associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction (McGill et al., 2016). Interpersonal communication skills, prosocial orientation, and active-empathic listening have all been found to be positively associated with mindfulness (Jones et al., 2019).

Mindfulness has been argued to pertain to supportive communication because both are grounded in processes of emotion regulation (Jones & Hansen, 2015). For example, one study examined how mindfulness influences empathy, active listening, and perceived provisions of emotional support (Jones et al., 2019). In this study, empathy and active listening mediated the connection between two facets of mindfulness (describing and observing) and perceptions of providing supportive messages (Jones et al., 2019). Though Jones et al. (2019) focused on support provision, their study offers evidence that mindfulness is associated with supportive communication.

Most research that integrates mindfulness with interpersonal communication measures individual levels of mindfulness with the five-facet mindfulness-based questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006). Derived from 112 pooled items from other existing mindfulness scales, the

FFMQ identifies five facets of mindfulness: observing, describing, aware acting, non-judging, and non-reacting (Baer et al., 2006). Observing entails paying attention to or recognizing internal and external events such as sensations, cognitions, emotions, sights, sounds, and smells.

Describing refers to labeling internal experiences, feelings, or emotions with words. Aware acting, or acting with awareness, entails attending to the present moment rather than behaving mindlessly. Nonjudging is defined as taking a non-evaluative stance towards experiences, feelings, or emotions. Finally, nonreacting refers to a nonreactivity to the inner experience, characterized by letting thoughts and feelings come and go without getting caught up by them (Baer et al., 2006). People who practice meditation have been found to have higher levels of these five facets of mindfulness compared to people who do not practice mindfulness or meditation (Baer et al., 2008).

Several researchers have used the FFMQ to demonstrate that mindfulness influences communication or relationships in contexts of patient-clinician care, workplace relationships, romantic relationships, and supportive interactions. For example, mindful clinicians engage in more patient-centered communication (Beach et al., 2013), mindful workers engage in more team-member exchange (Hawkes & Neale, 2020), mindful partners report being more satisfied in their relationship (McGill et al., 2016), and mindful support providers may be more likely to use effective supportive messages (Jones et al., 2019). However, a randomized trial revealed a contradiction between the FFMQ and established conceptualizations of mindfulness and common mindful interventions, showing the FFMQ to lack discriminant validity (Goldberg et al., 2016). In fact, Pratscher et al. (2019) argued that the ability of trait mindfulness, as measured by the FFMQ, to predict behavior during interpersonal encounters is limited. Consequently,

Pratscher et al. (2019) offered the interpersonal mindfulness scale (IMS) as an alternative measure to focus specifically on mindfulness within interpersonal interactions.

Interpersonal mindfulness is defined as “paying attention in the present moment while with another individual, including being aware of internal experiences (bodily sensations, thoughts, reactions, mood, etc.) and external experiences (verbal and nonverbal communication, apparent mood, etc.)” (Pratscher et al., 2019, p. 1057). The IMS has been shown to have convergent, discriminant, and incremental validity. Interpersonal mindfulness is comprised of four components: presence, awareness of self and others, nonjudgmental acceptance, and nonreactivity. Presence refers to paying attention to the present moment while interacting with another person. Awareness of self and others refers to noticing one’s moods and emotions while also being aware of the moods and nonverbal cues of others while interacting. Nonjudgmental acceptance refers to listening without judgment and accepting interpersonal experiences as they occur. Nonreactivity refers to taking time to respond thoughtfully (Pratscher et al., 2019). The four facets of this scale refer to mindfulness as it occurs within interpersonal contexts specifically, as opposed to other popular scales such as the FFMQ that measure trait levels of mindfulness. To understand how mindfulness functions interpersonally, the IMS should be used to understand interpersonal processes, such as supportive communication.

Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as paying attention in a certain way, on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment. As an intrapersonal, self-regulatory practice, mindfulness has been found to lessen symptoms of depression, anxiety, and chronic pain (Goyal et al., 2014). Research that has integrated mindfulness with interpersonal communication has shown that individual levels of mindfulness are associated with effectiveness in both sending and receiving communication (Jones & Hansen, 2015). Mindfulness has also been found to be

indirectly associated with high quality support provision, mediated by active listening and empathy (Jones et al., 2019). We build on this research to study whether and how mindfulness shapes the content and style of how people seek support. Although a majority of research regarding mindfulness and interpersonal communication has measured individual levels of mindfulness using the FFMQ (Baer et al., 2006), it may be more advantageous for researchers to utilize the IMS (Pratscher et al., 2019) to examine how people's levels of interpersonal mindfulness interact with their efficacy and motivation to seek support.

Focus of the Current Study

This study seeks to explain how interpersonal mindfulness, communicative efficacy, and motivation work together to influence how people seek support. Research has shown that the behavior used to seek support influences the quality of support that is provided (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; High & Scharp, 2015). Although prior research on seeking support commonly measures the directness of people's attempts to seek support (High & Scharp, 2015; Mortenson, 2009), the directness of a person's support seeking confounds the content and style of those behaviors. Attempts to seek support can be characterized by content (emotion focus, problem focus, and direct request) and style (explicitness and elaboration), where each of these dimensions is independent from the others. These dimensions of support seeking offer space for researchers to examine the variation within these behaviors and also what predicts those variations. Interpersonal mindfulness, or being aware and attentive of the self as well as accepting and receptive of others (Pratscher et al., 2019), is relevant to support seeking because it entails revealing information and accepting feedback (MacGeorge et al., 2011). Jones et al. (2019) found that high levels of mindfulness are associated with provisions of high quality support, and I extend the research on mindfulness in the context of support by examining its associations with how support is sought.

H1: Interpersonal mindfulness in the form of (a) presence, (b) awareness, (c) acceptance, and (d) nonreactivity is positively associated with the direct request, explicitness, elaboration, problem focus, and emotion focus in people's support seeking messages.

Although I predict that mindfulness enhances how people seek support, it is less clear which facets of interpersonal mindfulness maintain the strongest associations with different aspects of the content and style of support seeking. The present study adopts an exploratory

approach using a scale that measures interpersonal mindfulness in the following research question:

RQ1: Which facets of interpersonal mindfulness have the strongest associations with the (a) direct request, (b) explicitness, (c) elaboration, (d) problem focus, and (e) emotion focus in people's support seeking messages?

The present study also seeks to extend the dual process theory of supportive communication outcomes to examine how people's communicative efficacy and motivation influence how they seek support. Traditionally, this theory suggests that ability and motivation influence the extent to which people process supportive messages, which then influences the outcomes of supportive interactions (Burlinson et al., 2011). Prior research demonstrates that people's communicative adaptability and motivation correspond with the directness of their support seeking (High & Scharp, 2015). The present study extends research on the beneficial effects of communicative efficacy and motivation in the context of support to investigate the associations between communicative efficacy and motivation and the content and style of people's attempts to seek support. This thinking is reflected in the following hypotheses:

H2: People's efficacy to seek support is positively associated with the (a) direct request, (b) explicitness, (c) elaboration, (d) problem focus, and (e) emotion focus in their support seeking.

H3: People's motivation to seek support is positively associated with the (a) direct request, (b) explicitness, (c) elaboration, (d) problem focus, and (e) emotion focus in their support seeking.

Though communicative efficacy, motivation, and mindfulness have yet to be examined together in research, I contend that all three variables amplify each other's influence. Ability and

motivation have been found to be associated with the directness of support seeking behavior (High & Scharp, 2015; Mortenson, 2009). Mindfulness corresponds with effectiveness in sending and receiving communication (Jones & Hansen, 2015), and it also enhances attempts at support provision (Jones et al., 2019). Therefore, I argue that people who are more interpersonally mindful are effective support seekers, especially when they have high levels of communicative efficacy and motivation to seek support. To test this line of thinking, I hypothesize:

H4: There is an interaction between facets of interpersonal mindfulness and seekers' efficacy to seek support, such that efficacy increases the positive association between presence, awareness, acceptance, and nonreactivity on the (a) direct request, (b) explicitness, (c) elaboration, (d) problem focus, and (e) emotion focus in people's attempts to seek support.

H5: There is an interaction between facets of interpersonal mindfulness and seekers' motivation to seek support, such that motivation increases the positive association between presence, awareness, acceptance, and nonreactivity on the (a) direct request, (b) explicitness, (c) elaboration, (d) problem focus, and (e) emotion focus in people's attempts to seek support.

Methods

Participants

The sample ($N = 502$) was composed of participants recruited via Qualtrics. The participants ranged from 18 to 62 years old ($M = 24.80$, $SD = 15.92$). The majority of the sample self-identified as women (72.9%), followed by men (26.1%), then non-binary (1%). The majority of the sample self-identified as white (73.9%), followed by Black or African American (12.5%), Hispanic or Latinx (5.4%), multi-racial (5%), Asian, (1.2%), Native American or Indigenous (1%), and preferred not to report (1%). To qualify to participate in this study, participants had to be able to (1) identify a personal problem or stressor they were currently experiencing and (2) identify a person from whom they recently sought support.

Procedures

This study used a cross-sectional survey methodology where participants took an online questionnaire. To begin the study, participants recalled a current problem or stressor they were experiencing and were asked to describe it. Participants were shown the following paragraph:

Recall a recent stressor or problem that you have discussed with another person. Specifically, recall a topic that you may have just experienced or are still experiencing that you talked about with another person during the past two weeks. Stressors or problems may include another person, a relationship, or a difficult situation. For example, stressors or problems may include coping with work or school stress, dealing with challenges in your social life or living circumstances, or experiencing trouble with friends or relational partners. Consider anything that has recently frustrated, distressed, or troubled you, and that you have spoken to another person about. Use the space below to

describe your problem (1-3 sentences), then provide the initials of the person you are recalling you spoke with about it and note your relationship with them.

After completing the recall portion, participants were asked to complete a survey regarding the problem they just identified.

Measures

Perceived severity of stressor was measured with three items adapted from Burleson et al. (2011). Participants indicated the degree to which they perceive the stressor to be severe on a five-point scale from 1 (not at all serious/severe/upsetting) to 100 (very serious/severe/upsetting). Items were scored such that higher scores indicate more severe stressors ($M = 71.04$, $SD = 21.58$, $\alpha = .90$).

Relational closeness was measured with twelve items from Dibble et al.'s (2012) relational closeness scale. Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with statements about the person they identified on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include “*My relationship with [initials] is close*” and “*[Initials] and I disclose important personal things to each other.*” The items were averaged to create a composite variable where higher scores reflect higher perceptions of relational closeness ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.85$, $\alpha = .94$).

Experience with meditation was measured with three items. Participants were asked if they have meditated in the past, how long they have been practicing meditation, and how often they practiced meditation. To measure previous experience with meditation, participants were asked “Have you practiced meditation in the past?” Answer choices included no, occasionally, and yes. Participants who indicated no to this question were not asked the other two meditation items.

Communicative efficacy was measured using five items adapted from Afifi and Afifi's (2009) measure of efficacy. The items in this scale reflect the degree to which a person perceived efficacy or ability to seek support for problems they generally experience. Participants indicated the degree to which each statement applies to them on a five-point scale from 1 (never true of me) to 5 (always true of me). Sample items include "*I am able to approach others to talk about issues*" and "*I know that I could approach others to get comfort if I need it.*" These scores were averaged to create a composite variable where higher scores reflect higher communicative efficacy, which prior research has used as a measure of ability in the context of seeking support ($M = 3.80, SD = 0.85, \alpha = .81$).

Motivation was measured using High and Scharp's (2015) five item motivation measure. The items in this scale reflect the degree to which a person is motivated to seek support when they encounter a problem. Participants indicated the degree to which each statement applies to them on a five-point scale from 1 (never true of me) to 5 (always true of me). Sample items include "*I am highly motivated to seek comfort from other people when I have a problem*" and "*When I'm feeling bothered, I really want to seek support from family, friends, or other sources.*" These scores were averaged to create a composite variable, where higher scores reflect greater motivation to seek support ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.97, \alpha = .89$).

Interpersonal mindfulness was measured using Pratscher et al.'s (2019) interpersonal mindfulness scale. The items in this scale are divided into four different subscales that reflect different aspects of interpersonal mindfulness. Participants indicated how frequently they have each experience on a five-point scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). Sample items include "*When I am conversing with another person, I am fully engaged in the conversation*" (to measure presence); "*When I am with other people, I am aware of my moods and emotions*" (to

measure awareness of self and others); *“When I am with another person, I try to accept how they are behaving without wanting them to behave differently”* (to measure nonjudgmental acceptance); and *“I take time to form my thoughts before speaking”* (to measure nonreactivity). The scores in each subscale were averaged to create composite variables, where higher scores reflect higher degrees of presence ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.96$, $\alpha = .84$), awareness of self and others ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.61$, $\alpha = .86$), nonjudgmental acceptance ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.68$, $\alpha = .69$), and nonreactivity ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.72$, $\alpha = .81$).

Style of seeking support was measured using six items adapted from Priem and Solomon (2018). The items in this scale are adapted to reflect explicitness and elaboration in support seeking. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which each statement applied to them on a five-point scale from 1 (never true of me) to 5 (always true of me). Sample items include *“During the conversation, I sought support explicitly”* and *“During the conversation, I elaborated on my feelings or opinions.”* These scores were averaged to create composite variables, where higher scores reflect higher degrees of explicitness ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.30$, $\alpha = .90$) and elaboration ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.85$, $\alpha = .78$) in support seeking messages.

Content of seeking support was measured using scales adapted from Carver et al. (1989) and Derlega et al. (2003). The items in these scales are adapted to reflect emotion focus, and problem focus, and the extent to which people request assistance in their attempts to seek support. Participants indicated the degree to which each statement applies to them on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include *“I told the person that I talked to that I needed help”* (to measure direct request), *“I tried to focus on my emotions about the problem”* (to measure emotion focus), and *“I talked about my experiences and what I did”* (to measure problem focus). These scores were averaged to create composite variables,

where higher scores reflect higher degrees of direct request ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.09$, $\alpha = .81$), emotion focus ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .86$, $\alpha = .86$), and problem focus ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .80$, $\alpha = .78$) in support seeking messages.

Results

Preliminary analyses

We began by examining correlations among the variables in this study (see Table 1). The interpersonal mindfulness variables were all positively correlated with each other (r s ranged from .14 to .66, $p < .01$). The smallest correlation was between presence and awareness, and the largest correlation was between non-reactivity and awareness. The support seeking variables were all positively correlated with each other (r s ranged from .064, ns to .659, $p < .01$). The smallest correlation was between explicitness and direct request, and the largest correlation was between emotion focus and elaboration. Efficacy was positively and significantly correlated with all variables except for direct request (r s ranged from .075, ns to .336, $p < .01$), and motivation was positively and significantly correlated with all variables except for presence and explicitness (r s ranged from .008, ns to .507, $p < .01$).

Because mindfulness is related to meditation, we examined the influence of participants' previous experience with meditation on the substantive variables in our study. In particular, we tested the extent to which peoples' previous experience with meditation corresponded with the independent and dependent variables. 37.6% of participants reported not having practiced meditation, 32.5% of participants reported occasionally having practiced meditation, and 29.9% reported having practiced meditation. We used ANOVAs to examine the associations between previous experience with meditation (measured such that 1 = no previous experience, 2 = occasional previous experience, and 3 = previous experience) interpersonal mindfulness, support seeking, communicative efficacy, and motivation. Regarding the facets of interpersonal mindfulness, previous experience with meditation was not significantly associated with presence, $F(2, 499) = 1.26, ns$, or nonjudgment, $F(2, 499) = 2.33, ns$. Previous experience with meditation

was significantly associated with awareness of self and others, $F(2, 499) = 4.25, p = .015$, and with nonreactivity, $F(2, 499) = 5.12, p = .006$. For awareness of self and others, people who

Table 1

Correlation matrix

	VI	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11
V1: IMSAware	---										
V2: IMSPres	.142**	---									
V3: IMSNonj	.633**	.220**	---								
V4: IMSNonr	.656**	.160**	.657**	---							
V5: Direct Request	.117**	-.025	.190**	.123**	---						
V6: Elaboration	.301**	-.007	.257**	.226**	.361**	---					
V7: Explicitness	.089**	.066	.101*	.091*	.064	.197**	---				
V8: Emotion Focus	.319**	-.013	.287**	.263**	.310**	.659**	.150**	---			
V9: Problem Focus	.287**	.012	.330**	.265**	.532**	.556**	.128**	.510**	---		
V10: Efficacy	.325**	.261**	.319**	.336**	.075	.268**	.120**	.269**	.309**	---	
V11: Motivation	.242**	.008	.291**	.328**	.187**	.361**	.065	.421**	.370**	.507**	---

Note. IMSAware = awareness of self and others, IMSPres = presence, IMS Nonj = nonjudgmental acceptance, IMSNonr = nonreactivity. ** $p < .01$.

indicated that they have meditated in the past (i.e., answered “yes”) reported the highest levels of awareness ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .58$), followed by people who indicated that they have not meditated in the past ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .62$), then people who indicated that they have occasionally meditated in the past ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .61$). For nonreactivity, people who indicated that they have meditated in the past, both occasionally ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .74$) and generally ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .73$), reported more non-reactivity than those who have not practiced meditation in the past ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .68$).

Regarding the facets of support seeking, previous experience with meditation was not associated with direct request, $F(2, 499) = 2.10$, *ns*, explicitness, $F(2, 499) = 1.41$, *ns*, or problem focus, $F(2, 499) = 2.94$, *ns*. Previous experience with meditation was significantly associated with elaboration, $F(2, 499) = 8.78$, $p < .001$, and emotion focus in people’s support seeking, $F(2, 499) = 3.83$, $p = .022$. For elaboration, people who indicated that they have meditated in the past, both occasionally ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .84$) and generally ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .74$), reported more elaboration when seeking support than people who did not practice meditation in the past ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .89$). For emotion focus, people who indicated that they meditated in the past, both occasionally ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .85$) and generally ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .79$), reported more emotion focus when seeking support than people who did not practice meditation in the past ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .91$).

Regarding communicative efficacy and motivation, previous experience with meditation was not associated with motivation, $F(2, 499) = 1.32$, *ns*. Previous experience with meditation was significantly associated with communicative efficacy $F(2, 499) = 3.14$, $p = .044$. People who indicated that they have generally mediated in the past ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .79$)s reported more communicative efficacy compared to people who indicated that they have occasionally meditated

($M = 3.69$, $SD = .89$) or not meditated at all ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .86$). These results led us to include previous experience with meditation as a covariate in our hypothesis tests.

We also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to examine the fit of the mindfulness variables as separate factors. In particular, we sought to assess whether the mindfulness scale fit better as a unidimensional scale or a collection of separate factors. We began with a model in which each item loaded onto its respective subscale, and all subscales were allowed to correlate. The initial test of this model did not provide good fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 997.27$, CFI = .86, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .11. We consulted modification indices and iteratively eliminated two items due to substantial cross loading. The revised model produced good fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 549.07$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05. We next tested the fit of a unidimensional model in which each item loaded on a single mindfulness factor. The initial fit was poor, $\chi^2 = 1956.35$, CFI = .69, RMSEA = .10, SRMR = .11. We iteratively consulted modification indices until we found a model that fit the data. Doing so required us to cut three items and correlate two pairs of error terms. The revised unidimensional model produced adequate fit, $\chi^2 = 795.45$, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06. On the basis of the CFA results, we concluded that a model in which mindfulness was composed of separate correlated subscales both fit the data well and fit better than a unidimensional model. In the substantive analyses that follow, mindfulness is treated as awareness of self and others, presence, nonjudgmental acceptance, and nonreactivity, which are all intercorrelated. This treatment of the mindfulness variable is also consistent with its conceptualization.

Tests of hypotheses

We used hierarchical regression analyses to test our hypotheses (see Table 2), the first step of which included three covariates. The covariates included relational closeness, perceived

Table 2

Results from hierarchical regression models testing interpersonal mindfulness, communicative efficacy, motivation, and support seeking behavior

Variable	Direct Request	Explicitness	Elaboration	Emotion Focus	Problem Focus
Step 1 R ²	.07***	.02*	.18***	.20***	.13***
RelClose	.21***	.05	.38***	.43***	.31***
Severity	.14**	.11*	.09*	.12*	.17***
Meditate	.07	.03	.12*	.06	.07
Step 2 R ² Δ	.03***	.02	.11***	.14***	.14***
IMSPres	-.04	.02	-.03	-.04	-.06
IMSAware	-.02	-.01	.21***	.19**	.07
IMSNonj	.16*	.03	.04	.04	.16**
IMSNonr	-.01	.04	-.06	-.02	-.01
Efficacy	-.05	.11*	.03	-.02	.12*
Motivation	.12*	-.03	.23***	.30***	.19***
Step 3 R ² Δ	.01	.02	.01	.01	.01
IMSPresXEff	.24	.01	1.4	.32	-.07
IMSAwareXEff	-.06	1.2	.16	.32	.65
IMSNonjXEff	.54	-.59	.06	.25	-.50
IMSNonrXEff	-.59	-1.1	.10	-.28	-.50
IMSPresXMot	-.37	.29	-1.7	-.11	-.19
IMSAwareXMot	.27	-.06	-.48	-.32	.39
IMSNonjXMot	.46	-.49	.28	-.01	.18
IMSNonrXMot	-.01	.90	.32	.06	.12

Note. IMSPres = presence, IMSAware = awareness of self and others, IMS Nonj = nonjudgmental acceptance,

IMSNonr = nonreactivity. All values are standardized. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

severity of the recalled stressor, and previous experience with meditation. We ran separate regressions for each dependent variable, which included direct request, explicitness, elaboration, emotion focus, and problem focus within people's recalled support seeking. Relational closeness was positively associated with direct request ($\beta = .21, p < .001$), elaboration ($\beta = .38, p < .001$), emotion focus ($\beta = .43, p < .001$), and problem focus ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) in people's support seeking messages. Perceived severity was significantly associated with all facets of people's support seeking messages, including direct request ($\beta = .14, p < .01$), explicitness ($\beta = .11, p < .05$), elaboration ($\beta = .09, p < .05$), emotion focus ($\beta = .12, p < .01$), and problem focus ($\beta = .17, p < .001$). Finally, prior experience with meditation was only significantly associated with people's elaboration ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) in their support seeking messages. The second step in our regression models included the main effects of the interpersonal mindfulness variables, communicative efficacy, and motivation. The third step included interaction terms created by combining the interpersonal mindfulness variables with efficacy and motivation.

H1 posited that interpersonal mindfulness is positively associated with the direct request, explicitness, elaboration, emotion focus, and problem focus within people's support seeking messages. Step two, or the main effects portion of the hierarchical regression, was used to examine H1. Awareness of self and others was positively associated with elaboration ($\beta = .21, p < .001$) and with emotion focus ($\beta = .19, p < .01$) in people's support seeking messages. Nonjudgmental acceptance was positively associated with direct request ($\beta = .16, p < .05$) and with problem focus ($\beta = .16, p < .01$) within people's support seeking messages. Presence and non-reactivity were not associated with any of the support seeking variables. Thus, H1 is partially supported.

RQ1 asked which facets of interpersonal mindfulness had the strongest associations with support seeking behaviors. Fisher's r to z transformations were used to examine RQ1. When considering the associations between direct request as a dimension of seeking support and facets of mindfulness, awareness of self and others maintained a stronger association with direct request than presence ($z = 2.429, p = .008$) and nonjudgment ($z = 1.834, p = .033$). Presence also exhibited a weaker association with direct request in support seeking than nonjudgment ($z = -3.879, p < .001$) and nonreactivity ($z = -2.56, p = .005$), and nonjudgment maintained a stronger association than nonreactivity ($z = 1.834, p = .033$). When considering the associations between elaboration and facets of mindfulness, awareness of self and others had a stronger association with elaboration than presence ($z = 5.383, p = 0$) and nonreactivity ($z = 2.109, p = .017$). When considering the associations between emotion focus and facets of mindfulness, awareness of self and others had a stronger association with emotion focus than presence ($z = 5.819, p < .001$). Presence also exhibited a stronger association with emotion focus than nonjudgment ($z = -5.482, p < .001$) and nonreactivity ($z = 4.844, p < .001$). Finally, when considering the associations between problem focus and facets of mindfulness, awareness of self and others had a stronger association with problem focus than presence ($z = 4.8, p < .001$). Presence also exhibited a stronger association with problem focus than nonjudgment ($z = -8.522, p < .001$) and nonreactivity ($z = -4.447, p < .001$). There were no differences found between the facets of mindfulness and explicitness as the dimension of support seeking. Overall, compared to all other facets of interpersonal mindfulness, awareness of self and others had the strongest association with all dimensions of support seeking behavior except for explicitness. Nonreactivity had weaker associations than all other facets of interpersonal mindfulness with direct request, elaboration, emotion focus, and problem focus. Although there were no significant

differences between the facets of interpersonal mindfulness and explicitness in support seeking, the majority of all other comparisons were significantly different from each other.

H2 and H3 posit that people's communicative efficacy and motivation to seek support are positively associated with the direct request, explicitness, elaboration, emotion focus, and problem focus within their support seeking behavior. Step two of the hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine H2 and H3. Communicative efficacy was positively associated with the explicitness ($\beta = .11, p < .05$) and problem focus ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) in people's support seeking messages. In contrast, ability did not have a significant association with direct request, elaboration, or emotion focus within those messages. Motivation was positively associated with each facet of support seeking except for explicitness. Specifically, motivation was positively associated with direct request ($\beta = .12, p < .05$), elaboration, ($\beta = .23, p < .001$), emotion focus ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and problem focus ($\beta = .19, p < .001$) within people's support seeking messages. Thus, H2 and H3 are partially supported.

H4 and H5 proposed interaction effects between the facets of interpersonal mindfulness and seekers' communicative efficacy and motivation to seek support on their support seeking behavior. Step three, or the interaction effects portion of the hierarchical regressions, was used to examine H4 and H5. Some interaction effects were approaching significance, but no significant interactions were found. Awareness of self and others combined with communicative efficacy in a manner that approached significance on explicitness ($\beta = 1.17, p = .052$). Nonreactivity combined with communicative efficacy also approached a statistically significant association on explicitness, ($\beta = -1.0, p = .075$). We unpacked the interactions to understand the combination of these variables on explicitness. Although none of the individual effects were significant, awareness of self and others was negatively associated with explicitness at low ($b = -.06, ns$) and

average ($b = -.01, ns$) levels of efficacy, and it was positively associated with explicitness at high levels of efficacy ($b = .04, ns$). Nonreactivity was positively associated with explicitness at low ($b = .13, ns$) and average ($b = .05, ns$) levels of efficacy, and it was negatively associated with explicitness at high levels of efficacy ($b = -.02, ns$). Although these analyses might demonstrate trends with which facets of interpersonal mindfulness and efficacy combine to shape the explicitness of people's support seeking, H4 and H5 are ultimately not supported because all interactions failed to attain statistical significance.

Discussion

The process of supportive communication typically begins when a person seeks support, but the factors that explain variation within support seeking messages are relatively unknown. This study sought to expand how support seeking messages are conceptualized, to examine how mindfulness corresponds with support seeking behavior, and to uncover how mindfulness interacts with other variables that are relevant to support. Using broader research on interpersonal communication as a foundation, this study identifies two dimensions to better understand support seeking messages: content (i.e., direct request, emotion focus, and problem focus) and style (elaboration and explicitness). The most effective seeking messages are thought to include direct, elaborate, and explicit disclosures about a person's emotions and problem. To integrate mindfulness further into research on supportive communication, this study used a measure of interpersonal mindfulness, as opposed to previously used measures of trait mindfulness, to examine how it corresponds with seeking behaviors. To uncover how mindfulness interacts with other variables that are relevant to support, this study focused on efficacy and motivation to see whether they combine with interpersonal mindfulness to influence seeking behaviors. All significant findings were documented after controlling for several variables related to mindfulness and support seeking, including perceived severity of the stressor, perceived relational closeness with the support provider, and previous experience with meditation. In general, the findings of this study indicate that mindfulness plays a role in how people seek support.

Implications

This study expanded how support seeking messages are conceptualized and studied. Prior conceptualizations of support seeking have been criticized for describing the strategies used to

seek support rather than explaining a person's actual communication (Goldsmith, 1995). To address that criticism, we turned to prior research and theory to identify dimensions of support seeking messages for inclusion in this study. We drew upon research on esteem support, supportive messages, and disclosure to further conceptualize these dimensions (High & Dillard, 2012; Holmstrom & Burleson 2011; Shebib et al., 2020). The content of a message includes the extent to which a person perceives they requested help, focused on their emotions, and focused on their problem while seeking support. The style of a message includes the extent to which people perceive they were elaborate and explicit in their messages while seeking support. These dimensions allowed us to examine how interpersonal mindfulness is related to several variables that describe how people seek support. In this study, the components of support seeking were all moderately correlated with each other; however, the different dimensions of seeking support maintained different associations with interpersonal mindfulness. These findings demonstrate how the content and style of support seeking messages are related but distinct concepts. This conceptualization of messages used to seek support offers researchers a more precise way to examine variance within support seeking behavior.

By examining how interpersonal mindfulness corresponds with the content and style of support seeking behavior, this study further integrated mindfulness into research on supportive communication. Previous research has drawn connections between mindfulness and support provision (Jones et al., 2019) and created a measure of interpersonal mindfulness for use in social contexts (Pratscher et al., 2019). Our study synthesizes this work by making connections between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking behavior.

Mindfulness may be understood as a form of undirected meditation, whereas meditation is a more formal practice often used to alter or improve one's state of mind (Walsh & Shapiro,

2006). Furthermore, mindfulness is an intentional attention that is nonjudgmental and nonreactive that can be accessed at any given moment, whereas meditation is a traditional, directed, deliberate practice. Because of these similarities, we included previous experience with meditation as a covariate in our study. Participants who indicated that they have practiced meditation in the past showed several notable differences compared to those who indicated that they have not practiced meditation. Generally, these differences contribute to the growing evidence that meditation practice is related to changes in personality traits and in behavior (Baer et al. 2008; Pascoe et al., 2021; Sedlmeier et al., 2012). The participants who indicated they practiced meditation in the past (i.e., indicated “yes” rather than “occasionally” or “no”) showed higher levels of awareness of self and others and nonreactivity. These findings suggest that meditation practice may lead to a cultivation of specific facets of interpersonal mindfulness. Participants who indicated that they have practiced meditation in the past also showed higher levels of elaboration and emotion focus within support seeking behavior. These findings provide evidence for a relationship between meditation practice and effective support seeking, especially related to a seeker’s emotions. Finally, participants who have previous experience with meditation also showed higher levels of communicative efficacy. Previous research has shown that mindfulness in communication training may reduce negative reactivity in communication (Huston et al., 2011). The findings of the current study provide further evidence for a relationship between meditation practice, certain facets of interpersonal mindfulness, certain dimensions of effective support seeking, and efficacious communication.

We chose to focus on interpersonal mindfulness rather than measures of trait mindfulness due to previous research that pointed out limitations in the latter measures and their ability to predict communicative behavior (Pratscher et al., 2019). For example, findings from Barnes et al.

(2007) show that compared to trait mindfulness, state mindfulness, or the mindfulness that exists during social interactions, is more closely associated with communication quality. Whereas previous research has successfully found relationships between trait mindfulness and support provision (Jones et al., 2019), our study shows that relationships exist between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking. These findings have implications for research on mindfulness and interpersonal communication, showing that it may be more beneficial for researchers to measure mindfulness specifically related to communication when investigating how mindfulness corresponds with communication.

Another goal of our study was to examine how facets of interpersonal mindfulness correspond with how people seek support. In doing so, we found relationships between awareness of self and others and the content and style of support seeking messages. Specifically, after controlling for perceived severity of the stressor, relational closeness, and previous experience with meditation, we found a positive association between awareness of self and others and emotion focus. We also found that awareness of self and others had the strongest association with all support seeking variables except for explicitness. These findings are in line with prior research that has shown mindful awareness to be related to empathic accuracy and predicting the emotions of others (Kang et al., 2022). Our findings extend what is known about awareness of self and others by offering compelling evidence that it leads to effective support seeking. Findings from Jones et al. (2019) suggest an indirect relationship between observing, describing, and support provision, mediated by empathy and active listening. Observing and describing, according to Baer et al. (2006), entail paying attention to emotions or feelings and labeling them with words. These definitions are in line with Pratscher et al.'s (2019) definition of awareness of self and others because they both involve attention and emotions. Our results

extend knowledge about the relationships between awareness, emotions, and support, as they are specifically related to support seeking behaviors. Thus, awareness of self and others is an important facet of mindfulness that has implications for the ways in which people focus on their emotions when seeking support.

Participants who showed higher levels of awareness of self and others also showed higher levels of elaboration when seeking support. Elaboration enhances the likelihood that people will pay attention to and accept messages (Feng & Burleson, 2008). Within the context of support provision, elaboration may predict emotional improvement for support seekers (Priem & Solomon, 2018). Our findings indicate that awareness of self and others is also related to the elaboration within support seeking messages that is likely to be an effective component of asking for assistance. Therefore, not only does this purposeful awareness have implications for how much people focus on their emotions while seeking support, but it also has implications for how elaborate they are.

Our study also found relationships between the facet of mindfulness focused on nonjudgmental acceptance and the content of support seeking messages. Specifically, after controlling for the perceived severity of the stressor, relational closeness, and previous experience with meditation, we found positive associations between nonjudgmental acceptance and the direct request and problem focus of people's support seeking. Researchers have identified seeking support as a face-threatening act (Paik, 2020) because it may damage a person's preferred image (Goffman, 1967). The perceived costs of seeking support have even been found to inhibit people from requesting the help they need (Scott et al., 2013). Our findings demonstrate how nonjudgmental acceptance may circumvent some of the costs of seeking support directly and in a problem focused manner. Nonjudging has been described by some

researchers as letting go of difficult emotions and accepting them as impermanent (Baer et al., 2008). Prior research on nonjudgmental acceptance has found that it is a mechanism that can reduce physiological reactivity to stressors (Lindsay et al., 2018) and emotional stimuli (Dang-Glauser & Gross, 2015). Perhaps nonjudgmental acceptance reduces stress about a problem and enables individuals to seek support directly. The directness with which people seek support has implications for the remainder of a supportive interaction (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Rains et al., 2021; Van Swol et al., 2017). Thus, when seeking support about a stressor, nonjudgmental acceptance is a crucial component of interpersonal mindfulness that may allow people to seek support directly and focus on their problem.

No relationships were found between the facets of interpersonal mindfulness that focus on presence and nonreactivity and the content and style of support seeking messages. Moreover, nonreactivity had the weakest associations of all facets of interpersonal mindfulness with nearly all support seeking behaviors. Presence refers to paying attention to the present moment while interacting with someone, and nonreactivity refers to taking time to thoughtfully respond to someone (Pratscher et al., 2019). At face value, presence and nonreactivity may be less relevant to seeking support, perhaps because they are affective components of interpersonal mindfulness.

Researchers have described mindfulness as both cognitive and affective (Feldman et al., 2022), but do not clearly distinguish which components of mindfulness are more cognitive and which are more affective. By their definitions, presence and nonreactivity may be considered to be more affective components of mindfulness, and awareness of self and others and nonjudgmental acceptance may be considered to be more cognitive. Some describe mindfulness as a foundation of cognitive change that results in clear understanding (Pali: *vipassana*), whereby shifts in attentional focus result in shifts in cognitive content (Dreyfus, 2011). If awareness of

self and others and nonjudgmental acceptance are cognitive mechanisms, our findings demonstrate their effects on effective support seeking. Researchers have recently operationalized presence as a body-anchored experience, arguing that presence is based on a connection with internal bodily states (Khoury et al., 2022). Kabat-Zinn (2015) described mindfulness as a natural quality that must be refined through systemic practice, and it is possible that cognitive aspects are more easily refined than affective aspects. This is partially reflected in our findings because the participants who indicated that they have meditated in the past showed higher levels of nonreactivity. Nonetheless, more research is needed to determine if and when presence and nonreactivity have implications for support seeking and supportive communication more broadly.

This study also considered how interpersonal mindfulness interacts with efficacy and motivation, which are two variables that are relevant to supportive communication, to shape how people seek support. No interaction effects were found between efficacy, motivation, and interpersonal mindfulness on support seeking behavior. This shows that there is a direct relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and the content and style of support seeking messages, independent from their general levels of ability and motivation. Stated differently, interpersonal mindfulness does not require additional personal attributions (i.e., efficacy and motivation) to have a relationship with support seeking behavior, and the aforementioned associations exist regardless of people's efficacy as communicators or motivation to seek support.

Despite the lack of significant interactions with mindfulness, we did find direct associations between efficacy, motivation, and support seeking behavior. These findings are in line with those of High & Scharp (2015), who found that communicative adaptability and

motivation are related to how people seek support. We found that efficacy is related to explicitness and problem focus within support seeking behavior, and motivation is related to direct request, elaboration, emotion focus, and problem focus within support seeking behavior. Motivation shaped more aspects of seeking support than efficacy, perhaps because skilled communicators may not be able to put their skills to use if they are not also motivated to seek support. Prior research, however, has found that people who show higher levels of efficacy are more likely to be direct when seeking support (Mortenson, 2009; High & Scharp, 2015). Although we did not find a relationship between efficacy and direct request, our findings do contribute to the evidence of a relationship between efficacy and seeking support. Prior research has shown that motivation is related to support seeking (Bodie, 2012; Feng & MacGeorge, 2010; Oh & LaRose, 2016), and our findings show that motivation is also related to the more nuanced conceptualization of support seeking behavior used in this study. Based on the absence of interaction effects and the presence of relationships between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking, it is possible that efficacy and motivation mediate the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking behavior. That thinking, however, is speculative until it is subject to empirical test.

Limitations

This study was limited in ways that are worth noting. First, our study used a cross-sectional design to test the hypotheses and research questions. Cross-sectional data are limited because they cannot establish causation among variables. Second, our study used a recall method in which participants were asked to think back to a situation when they sought support from someone else. Recall methods are limited because people's memories may not align with what

actually took place during an interpersonal interaction (Benoit et al., 1996). When generalizing the findings of the current study, these limitations must be considered.

Future Research

Findings from this study show how interpersonal mindfulness is related to the content and style of peoples' support seeking messages. Based on our findings, efficacy and motivation are related to support seeking behavior but do not interact with a person's interpersonal mindfulness. It is possible, then, that efficacy and motivation are the mechanisms through which interpersonal mindfulness is related to support seeking behavior. This line of thinking suggests that interpersonal mindfulness is related to support seeking behavior because of a person's efficacy and motivation. Moving forward, researchers should test mediation models to uncover whether efficacy and motivation are the mechanisms that explain the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking behavior.

Future research should also continue to parse out the facets of interpersonal mindfulness to understand how they function and produce different outcomes. Our study found that different facets of mindfulness have relationships with different support seeking behaviors, which indicates that these facets have different implications for support seeking and possibly interpersonal communication more broadly. Lindsay et al. (2018) dismantled facets of mindfulness in interventions to understand the differences between mindful acceptance training and observing training on stress reactivity. To continue to understand the functionality of the facets of interpersonal mindfulness, researchers may use cross-sectional methods, experimental methods, longitudinal methods, or interventions. Mindfulness, as an intrapersonal practice, has been shown to have a multitude of beneficial outcomes (Davis & Hayes, 2011; Schreiner &

Malcolm, 2008). Mindfulness as it manifests interpersonally, however, is a newer area of research that can be expanded in various ways.

Finally, researchers should develop longitudinal interventions to determine causality between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking. The current study established that there are relationships between these variables, but it is unable to determine causal order. An intervention that teaches participants mindfulness, interpersonal mindfulness, or mindful communication practices may be used to determine their effects on support seeking and supportive communication. Longitudinal intervention methods would not only help determine causality between variables, but they could also allow researchers to examine actual communication by coding messages. Because we found associations between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking behavior, it is possible that an intervention that teaches people how to be more interpersonally mindful may influence their enacted communication rather than perceptions or recollections of it.

Conclusion

This study aimed to add nuance to how support seeking messages are defined and measured, to examine the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking, and to understand whether interpersonal mindfulness interacts with efficacy and motivation in relation to support seeking. The findings from this study demonstrate that the extent to which people are interpersonally mindful is related to how they seek support. Establishing the relationship between interpersonal mindfulness and support seeking sets the stage to make people more effective support seekers, which in turn, will hopefully make them seek the support they need to feel better, reappraise stress, and cope with a variety of troubles.

References

- Afifi, W. A., & Afifi, T. D. (2009). Avoidance among adolescents in conversations about their parents' relationship: Applying the theory of motivated information management. *Journal of social and personal relationships, 26*(4), 488-511.
- Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*, 27-45.
- Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Lykins, E., Button, D., Krietemeyer, J., Sauer, S., ... & Williams, J. M. G. (2008). Construct validity of the five facet mindfulness questionnaire in meditating and nonmeditating samples. *Assessment, 15*(3), 329-342.
- Bandura, A. (1995). Comments on the crusade against the causal efficacy of human thought. *Journal of behavior therapy and experimental psychiatry, 26*(3), 179-190.
- Barbee, A. P., & Cunningham, M. R. (1995). An experimental approach to social support communications: Interactive coping in close relationships. *Communication Yearbook, 18*, 381 – 413.
- Barrera, M. (1986). Distinctions between social support concepts, measures, and models. *American journal of community psychology, 14*(4), 413-445
- Beach, M. C., Roter, D., Korthuis, P. T., Epstein, R. M., Sharp, V., Ratanawongsa, N., ... & Saha, S. (2013). A multicenter study of physician mindfulness and health care quality. *The Annals of Family Medicine, 11*(5), 421-428.
- Benoit, W. L., Benoit, P. J., & Wilkie, J. (1996). Participants' and observers' memory for conversational behavior. *Southern Journal of Communication, 61*(2), 139-154.

- Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J., ... & Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: a proposed operational definition. *Clinical psychology: Science and practice, 11*(3), 230.
- Bodie, G. D. (2011). The role of thinking in the comforting process: An empirical test of a dual-process framework. *Communication Research, 40*(4), 533-558.
- Bodie, G. D. (2012). Listening as positive communication. *The positive side of interpersonal communication, 109-125*.
- Bodie, G. D., Jones, S. M., Brinberg, M., Joyer, A. M., Solomon, D. H., & Ram, N. (2021). Discovering the fabric of supportive conversations: A typology of speaking turns and their contingencies. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 40*(2), 214-237.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 84*(4), 822.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2004). Perils and promise in defining and measuring mindfulness: observations from experience.
- Burgoon, J. K., Berger, C. R., & Waldron, V. R. (2000). Mindfulness and interpersonal communication. *Journal of Social Issues, 56*(1), 105-127.
- Burleson, B. R., MacGeorge, E. L., Knapp, M. L., & Daly, J. A. (2002). Supportive communication. *Handbook of interpersonal communication, 3*, 374-424.
- Burleson, B. R., Hanasono, L. K., Bodie, G. D., Holmstrom, A. J., McCullough, J. D., Rack, J. J., & Rosier, J. G. (2011). Are gender differences in responses to supportive communication a matter of ability, motivation, or both? Reading patterns of situation effects through the lens of a dual-process theory. *Communication Quarterly, 59*(1), 37-60.

- Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: a theoretically based approach. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *56*(2), 267.
- Caughlin, J. P., Brashers, D. E., Ramey, M. E., Kosenko, K. A., Donovan-Kicken, E., & Bute, J. J. (2008). The message design logics of responses to HIV disclosures. *Human Communication Research*, *34*(4), 655-684.
- Chaudoir, S. R., & Fisher, J. D. (2010). The disclosure processes model: understanding disclosure decision making and postdisclosure outcomes among people living with a concealable stigmatized identity. *Psychological bulletin*, *136*(2), 236.
- Dan-Glauser, E. S., & Gross, J. J. (2015). The temporal dynamics of emotional acceptance: Experience, expression, and physiology. *Biological psychology*, *108*, 1-12.
- Davis, D. M., & Hayes, J. A. (2011). What are the benefits of mindfulness? A practice review of psychotherapy-related research. *Psychotherapy*, *48*(2), 198.
- Derlega, V. J., Winstead, B. A., & Greene, K. (2008). Self-disclosure and starting a close relationship.
- Derlega, V. J., Winstead, B. A., Oldfield, E. C., III, & Barbee, A. P. (2003). Close relationships and social support in coping with HIV: A test of sensitive interaction systems theory. *AIDS and Behavior*, *7*, 119–129. doi:10.1023/A:102399010707
- Dillard, J. P., & Marshall, L. J. (2003). Persuasion as a social skill.
- Dreyfus, G. (2011). Is mindfulness present-centered and non-judgmental? A discussion of the cognitive dimensions of mindfulness. *Contemporary Buddhism*, *12*(1), 41-54.
- Duran, R. (1992). Communicative adaptability: A review of conceptualization and measurement. *Communication Quarterly*, *30*, 253–268. doi:10.1080/01463379209369840

- Feng, B., & Burleson, B. R. (2008). The effects of argument explicitness on responses to advice in supportive interactions. *Communication Research*, 35(6), 849-874.
- Feng, B., & MacGeorge, E. L. (2010). The influences of message and source factors on advice outcomes. *Communication Research*, 37(4), 553-575.
- Feldman, G., Westine, M., Edelman, A., Higgs, M., Renna, M., & Greeson, J. (2022). Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R). In *Handbook of Assessment in Mindfulness Research* (pp. 1-24). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Goffman, E. (1967). On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction interaction ritual—essays on face-to-face behavior. *Pantheon, New York*.
- Goldberg, S. B., Wielgosz, J., Dahl, C., Schuyler, B., MacCoon, D. S., Rosenkranz, M., ... & Davidson, R. J. (2016). Does the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire measure what we think it does? Construct validity evidence from an active controlled randomized clinical trial. *Psychological assessment*, 28(8), 1009.
- Goldsmith, D. J. (1995). The communicative microdynamics of support. *Communication Yearbook*, 18, 414-433.
- Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E. M., Gould, N. F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., ... & Haythornthwaite, J. A. (2014). Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA internal medicine*, 174(3), 357-368.
- Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, 57(1), 35-43.

- Harvey-Knowles, J. A. (2018). Verbal person-centered support provision quality following an exploratory supportive skills intervention. *Western Journal of Communication*, 82(1), 75-99.
- Hawkes, A. J., & Neale, C. M. (2020). Mindfulness beyond wellbeing: Emotion regulation and team-member exchange in the workplace. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 72(1), 20-30.
- High, A. C., & Dillard, J. P. (2012). A review and meta-analysis of person-centered messages and social support outcomes. *Communication Studies*, 63(1), 99-118.
- High, A. C., & Scharp, K. M. (2015). Examining family communication patterns and seeking social support direct and indirect effects through ability and motivation. *Human Communication Research*, 41(4), 459-479.
- Holmstrom, A. J., & Burleson, B. R. (2011). An initial test of a cognitive-emotional theory of esteem support messages. *Communication Research*, 38(3), 326-355.
- Holmstrom, A. J., Bodie, G. D., Burleson, B. R., McCullough, J. D., Rack, J. J., Hanasono, L. K., & Rosier, J. G. (2015). Testing a dual-process theory of supportive communication outcomes: How multiple factors influence outcomes in support situations. *Communication Research*, 42(4), 526-546.
- Huston, D. C., Garland, E. L., & Farb, N. A. (2011). Mechanisms of mindfulness in communication training. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 39(4), 406-421.
- Jones, S. M., Bodie, G. D., & Hughes, S. D. (2019). The impact of mindfulness on empathy, active listening, and perceived provisions of emotional support. *Communication Research*, 46(6), 838-865.

- Jones, S. M., & Guerrero, L. K. (2001). The effects of nonverbal immediacy and verbal person centeredness in the emotional support process. *Human Communication Research*, 27(4), 567-596.
- Jones, S. M., & Hansen, W. (2015). The impact of mindfulness on supportive communication skills: Three exploratory studies. *Mindfulness*, 6(5), 1115-1128.
- Kabat-Zinn J. (1994) *Wherever you go there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2015). Mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 6(6), 1481-1483.
- Kang, C., & Whittingham, K. (2010). Mindfulness: A dialogue between Buddhism and clinical psychology. *Mindfulness*, 1(3), 161-173.
- Kang, Y., Cakar, M. E., Shumaker, K., O'Donnell, M. B., & Falk, E. B. (2022). Experience Similarity, Mindful Awareness, and Accurate Interpersonal Understanding. *Mindfulness*, 1-11.
- Kent de Grey, R. G. K., Uchino, B. N., Smith, T. W., & Baucom, B. R. (2018). (Too) Anxious to help? Social support provider anxiety and cardiovascular function. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 123, 171-178.
- Khoury, B., Vergara, R. C., & Spinelli, C. (2022). Interpersonal Mindfulness Questionnaire: Scale Development and Validation. *Mindfulness*, 13(4), 1007-1031.
- Lampe, C., Gray, R., Fiore, A. T., & Ellison, N. (2014, February). Help is on the way: Patterns of responses to resource requests on Facebook. In *Proceedings of the 17th ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work & social computing* (pp. 3-15).
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Progress on a cognitive-motivational-relational theory of emotion. *American psychologist*, 46(8), 819.

- Li, M. H., & Yang, Y. (2009). Determinants of problem solving, social support seeking, and avoidance: A path analytic model. *International Journal of Stress Management*, *16*(3), 155.
- Linden, W., & Vodermaier, A. (2012). Mismatch of desired versus perceived social support and associated levels of anxiety and depression in newly diagnosed cancer patients. *Supportive Care in Cancer*, *20*(7), 1449-1456.
- Lindsay, E. K., Chin, B., Greco, C. M., Young, S., Brown, K. W., Wright, A. G., ... & Creswell, J. D. (2018). How mindfulness training promotes positive emotions: Dismantling acceptance skills training in two randomized controlled trials. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *115*(6), 944.
- MacGeorge, E. L., Feng, B., & Burlseson, B. R. (2011). Supportive communication. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of interpersonal communication* (Vol., 4th ed., pp. 317–354). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- MacGeorge, E. L., Feng, B., Butler, G. L., & Budariz, S. K. (2004). Understanding advice in supportive interactions: Beyond the facework and message evaluation paradigm. *Human Communication Research*, *30*(1), 42-70. 30
- McGill, J., Adler-Baeder, F., & Rodriguez, P. (2016). Mindfully in love: A meta-analysis of the association between mindfulness and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, *4*(1).
- Mortenson, S. T. (2009). Interpersonal trust and social skill in seeking social support among Chinese and Americans. *Communication Research*, *36*(1), 32-53.
- Norberg, A. L., Lindblad, F., & Boman, K. K. (2006). Support-seeking, perceived support, and anxiety in mothers and fathers after children's cancer treatment. *Psycho-Oncology*:

- Journal of the Psychological, Social and Behavioral Dimensions of Cancer*, 15(4), 335-343.
- Oh, H. J., & LaRose, R. (2016). Impression management concerns and support-seeking behavior on social network sites. *Computers in human behavior*, 57, 38-47.
- Paik, J. E. (2020). The contextual effects of advice solicitation on advice outcomes: The role of perceived face threats and psychological reactance. *Communication Monographs*, 87(1), 70-91.
- Pascoe, M. C., Thompson, D. R., Jenkins, Z. M., & Ski, C. F. (2017). Mindfulness mediates the physiological markers of stress: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of psychiatric research*, 95, 156-178.
- Pratscher, S. D., Wood, P. K., King, L. A., & Bettencourt, B. (2019). Interpersonal mindfulness: Scale development and initial construct validation. *Mindfulness*, 10(6), 1044-1061.
- Priem, J. S., & Solomon, D. H. (2018). What is supportive about supportive conversation? Qualities of interaction that predict emotional and physiological outcomes. *Communication Research*, 45(3), 443-473.
- Rains, S. A. (2014). The implications of stigma and anonymity for self-disclosure in health blogs. *Health communication*, 29(1), 23-31.
- Rains, S. A., Ashtaputre, A., Nemcova, K., Lutovsky, B. R., Tsetsi, E., Pavlich, C. A., & Akers, C. (2021). The evolution of supportive conversations: Tracking within-discussion changes in support seeking and provision messages. *Communication Monographs*, 88(4), 483-505.
- Rains, S. A., Pavlich, C. A., Lutovsky, B., Tsetsi, E., & Ashtaputre, A. (2020). Support seeker expectations, support message quality, and supportive interaction processes and

- outcomes: The case of the comforting computer program revisited. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(2), 647-666.
- Roloff, M. E., Janiszewski, C. A., McGrath, M. A., Burns, C. S., & Manrai, L. A. (1988). Acquiring resources from intimates when obligation substitutes for persuasion. *Human Communication Research*, 14(3), 364-396.
- Samp, J. A., & Solomon, D. H. (1999). Communicative responses to problematic events in close relationships II: The influence of five facets of goals on message features. *Communication research*, 26(2), 193-239.
- Sarason, I. G., & Sarason, B. R. (2009). Social support: Mapping the construct. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26, 113 – 120.
- Schreiner, I., & Malcolm, J. P. (2008). The benefits of mindfulness meditation: Changes in emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. *Behaviour Change*, 25(3), 156-168.
- Scott, A. M., Caughlin, J. P., Donovan-Kicken, E., & Mikucki-Enyart, S. L. (2013). Do message features influence response to depression disclosure? A message design logics perspective. *Western Journal of Communication*, 77, 139-163.
- Sedlmeier, P., Eberth, J., Schwarz, M., Zimmermann, D., Haarig, F., Jaeger, S., & Kunze, S. (2012). The psychological effects of meditation: a meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 138(6), 1139.
- Segal, Z. V., Teasdale, J. D., & Williams, J. M. G. (2004). Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: Theoretical Rationale and Empirical Status.
- Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 62(3), 373-386.

- Shebib, S. J., Holmstrom, A. J., Summers, M. E., Clare, D. D., Reynolds, R. M., Poland, T. L., ... & Moore, S. (2020). Two experiments testing order, interaction, and absolute effects of esteem support messages directed toward job seekers. *Communication Research*, 47(4), 541-571.
- Steuber, K. R., & High, A. (2015). Disclosure strategies, social support, and quality of life in infertile women. *Human Reproduction*, 30(7), 1635-1642.
- Van Swol, L. M., MacGeorge, E. L., & Prah, A. (2017). Advise with permission? The effects of advice solicitation on advice outcomes. *Communication Studies*, 68(4), 476-492.
- Watzlawick, P., & Beavin, J. (1967). Some formal aspects of communication. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 10(8), 4-8.
- Williams, S. L., & Mickelson, K. D. (2008). A paradox of support seeking and rejection among the stigmatized. *Personal Relationships*, 15(4), 493-509.
- Zinn, J. K. (1994). Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life. *Hyperion*, 78-80.